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ABSTRACT

This study examined the experiences of participants in a basic writing course in a Midwestern community college. Two-thirds of the 18 students were highly educated students from Russia, Turkey, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan who were retirees, spouses of Americans, spouses of international students at the local university, or spouses of foreign technical elites. The class also had students with low educational attainment levels, including students from Laos and Sierra Leone. Students' goals ranged from improving their English to entering community college programs in law enforcement and accounting to earning bachelor's and master's degrees. This study traces the factors involved in the course's 75% dropout rate. Using sociocultural discourse analysis, it unravels the roles of the part-time status of the instructor, the varying backgrounds and goals of the students, and the lack of institutional support and services for students and the instructor. Students' disparate educational backgrounds, life situations, and future goals posed serious challenges to the predetermined curriculum and the traditional pedagogy the instructor used. The college's heavy reliance on part-time instructors typified staffing patterns at community colleges. This practice results in faculty with little connection to the institution, insufficient training and support for part-time instructors, and predetermined curriculum and "defensive teaching" that do not meet the needs of students. (Contains 186 references.) (NB)

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ED 458 897

# COMPETING GOALS, COMPETING DISCOURSES:

# ESL COMPOSITION AT THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

by

Mary Jane Curry

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of Doctor of Philosophy

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at the

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## ABSTRACT

### COMPETING GOALS, COMPETING DISCOURSES: ESL COMPOSITION AT THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

After a 50-year lull, immigration is on the rise, bringing newcomers with a wide range of educational attainment. An increasing number of nonnative speakers of English study at institutions of higher education, particularly the community college. The influx of students of English as a second language (ESL) into community colleges poses challenges to their competing missions to provide an "open door" to students seeking life skills, occupational training, and college preparation. To succeed in college, ESL students must become proficient in the conventions of academic discourse by learning general writing skills and academic literacies.

This study examines the experiences of participants in a basic writing course in a Midwestern community college. Two-thirds of the 18 students were highly educated students from Russia, Turkey, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan who were retirees, spouses of Americans, spouses of international students at the local university, or spouses of foreign technical elites. The class also had students with low educational attainment levels, including students from Laos and Sierra Leone. Students' goals ranged from improving their English to entering community college programs in law enforcement and accounting to earning bachelor's and master's degrees.

The study traces the factors involved in the course's 75% dropout rate. Using sociocultural discourse analysis, it unravels the roles of the part-time status of the instructor, the varying backgrounds and goals of the students, and the lack of institutional

support and services for students and instructor. The study employs curriculum theories of Basil Bernstein to understand the power relations within and outside the class and to examine the overt and hidden curricula. It also relies on Pierre Bourdieu's notion of forms of capital to understand the relationship between students' backgrounds and their subsequent educational achievements.

Students' disparate educational backgrounds, life situations, and future goals posed serious challenges to the predetermined curriculum and the traditional pedagogy the instructor used. The college's heavy reliance on part-time instructors typifies staffing patterns of community colleges. It results in faculty with little connection to the institution, insufficient training and support for part-time instructors, and predetermined curriculum and "defensive teaching" that do not meet the needs of students.

# COMPETING GOALS, COMPETING DISCOURSES: ESL COMPOSITION AT THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Under the supervision of Professor Michael W. Apple

At the University of Wisconsin-Madison

After a 50-year lull, immigration is on the rise, bringing newcomers with a wide range of educational attainment. An increasing number of nonnative speakers of English study at institutions of higher education, particularly the community college. The influx of students of English as a second language (ESL) into community colleges poses challenges to their competing missions to provide an "open door" to students seeking life skills, occupational training, and college preparation. To succeed in college, ESL students must become proficient in the conventions of academic discourse by learning general writing skills and academic literacies.

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In 1833, one-year-old Patrick Sarsfield Curry emigrated from County Cavan, Ireland, to Lowell, Massachusetts, with his parents. Part of a wave of Irish immigrants that predated the potato famine, according to family lore, the Curry family was not impoverished or starving. P.S. Curry grew up to become a dealer in granite and marble, and eventually U.S. government inspector of building construction in Nashua, New Hampshire. According to his 1906 obituary,

> He was a product of the public school in Lowell and served loyally in the War of the Rebellion. . . . He represented the old 10th district in the Massachusetts House in 1884 and 1885. . . .The weekly payment bill, the 10-hour bill, the free text book bill and a good many other measures that came before the House in 1884-85, he introduced or supported.. . . He was the only man in Essex county who has a daughter and a granddaughter teaching in the public schools. (Capt. P.S. Curry Dies, n.d.).

Patrick Sarsfield Curry was my great-great grandfather. His son Edward Martin apprenticed as a stonemason and later dealt in real estate. He married Mary Jane Robinson, another Irish immigrant, who worked in the textile mills in Lowell. Their son Justin, one of 11 children, graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and became an engineer. His wife was French-Canadian Alma DeVau, who worked in the shoe factories in Lynn and finished high school at night. (Nuns taught her classes in both English and French.) Their son James, my father, earned a Ph.D. at Cornell University and became a classics professor. He married Kay Oppenheimer, a lawyer whose German-Jewish family also had immigrated to the United States in the nineteenth century, but became steel mill owners rather than factory workers in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Today, almost a hundred years after the death of Patrick Sarsfield Curry, mass immigration looms again on the contemporary social landscape, which is now embedded in a post-agrarian, post-industrial economy. It is a cliché that the United States is a nation

of immigrants. That myth ignores the genocide of native American Indians, the enslavement of African peoples, and the myriad hardships, discrimination, and exploitation faced by refugees from all over the world once they reached the United States. Nonetheless immigration remains an important element of the historical development of United States society. As Portes and Rumbaut note:

> After a lapse of half a century, the United States has again become a country of immigration. In 1980, the foreign-born population reached 14.1 million or 6.2 percent of the total. Although a far cry from the situation sixty years earlier, when immigrants accounted for 13.2 percent of the American population, the impact of contemporary immigration is both significant and growing. (1990, p. 6).

These figures have increased. By March 1997, the number of foreign-born had become 25.8 million, "the largest foreign-born population in U.S. history [, which] represented an increase of 6.0 million, or 30 percent, over the 1990 census figure of 19.8 million" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). The foreign-born population is thus now 9.7 percent of the U.S. population (ibid.), matching nineteenth-century levels, and shows no signs of decreasing.

The trajectory of the lives of P. S. Curry and subsequent generations of Currys bear witness to the opportunities that have existed for certain types of immigrants at certain historical moments. The Currys availed themselves of public education, with each successive generation earning higher academic degrees. Nonetheless, in the agrarian and industrial economy of the nineteenth century, high levels of formal education were unnecessary for economic success (Graff, 1979). Brint and Karabel note that, "in 1890, the average American had not been educated beyond the fifth grade" (1989, p. 4). Indeed, as "a product of the Lowell schools," P. S. Curry was considered an educated man. In

addition to holding a government appointment he served as a Massachusetts legislator in the 1880s (before standing for public office required thousands or millions of dollars).

My interest in family history was merely passing until I started to teach English as a second language (ESL), when I began to recognize the role of education in the immigrant experience. Literacy in particular plays an increasingly important role in achieving success, defined in whatever way. As Brandt writes, "In an information economy, reading and writing serve as both instruments and products by which surplus wealth gets produced and competitive advantage gets won" (1999, p. 374). When I taught in Boston, my adult students came from Brazil, Haiti, Vietnam, El Salvador, Guatemala, China, Thailand, (Kurdish) Iran, Greece, the Azores, and many other countries. For the most part, these learners in the adult education programs and the state university where I worked were economically poor. Some, such as the Vietnamese, had emigrated as children or teenagers and attended bilingual programs in the Boston public schools. Other learners were considerably older, with a wide range of educational attainment levels and occupational goals. They all inspired my admiration and respect for pursuing their educational goals against difficult economic and cultural odds.

At the state university I developed an interest in how such students negotiate the world of higher education, in particular the public institutions designed to provide greater access than the institutions I knew from my privileged background. Following historical patterns, the immigrants whom I taught had successfully sought out the public services available to them as they made their way in a new country. Indeed, in 1998 nonnative speakers comprised "48% of those enrolled in all adult education courses[,] a number

almost equal to the combined total of those enrolled in adult basic education and adult secondary education" (Burt and Florez, 2000, p. 30). However, the assimilatory role of education has changed for today's immigrants:

> In the past two decades, as many immigrants have crossed U.S. borders as entered between 1880 and 1920, the apex of the second great migration. But unlike earlier periods, schooling as an assimilatory mechanism is in serious disrepair. Skeptical of the image of America as a land of unlimited opportunity, many immigrants have arrived acutely aware that they have been pushed here by poverty, by diminished expectations, or by one of the innumerable little wars that dot the globe, rather than being pulled by glittering prospects. (Aronowitz, 2000, p. 159)

In some measure, this shift is attributable to cyclical patterns in the reception that immigrants have found in the United States. In contrast to earlier decades in which a high demand for manual labor created a welcoming environment for immigrants, in the post-industrial economy, an isolationist, protectionist atmosphere developed. In the decade since I began teaching, national debates about the roles and rights of immigrants and refugees in U.S. society have becoming increasingly heated. Attacks have been mounted on the public services to which immigrants have been entitled. Anti-immigrant trends like the removal of benefits including food stamps from "legal" immigrants and the contents of California's 1994 Proposition 187, including the denial of education for the children of undocumented immigrants, demonstrate the uneasy relationship that "Americans" often have with immigrants (Petronicolos and New, 1999). These threats to public services mask the social and financial benefits that immigrants offer to the United States, not the least of which includes doing the dirty work that no one else will do. In fact, it is noteworthy that

> immigrants invariably contribute at least as much as they take, that they help the United States maintain its place as an international leader by changing, adapting, and evolving. This is a point easily lost amid the regional and national hysteria that has led to California's Proposition 187 and other such anti-immigrant measures. (Ungar, 1985, p. 24)

The American education system has played a large role in assimilating immigrants and refugees, simultaneously mitigating the social and economic tensions that resulted from large waves of immigration (Cohen and Lazerson, 1977). Historically, this function was performed for children in K-12 schools, and for adults in high school or adult education "Americanization" classes. "National/cultural assimilation takes on a special significance in the United States, which since the 1830s has presented the educational system with successive immigration waves, whose integration," Aronowitz suggests, "is its main historical function. At every level of the educational hierarchy, the task is the same for all groups; only the curriculum differs" (2000, p. 5). For adult immigrants, learning English is necessary for leaving behind the custodial, care-giving; and agricultural jobs that few native-born Americans will accept. Yet not all contemporary immigrants arrive in the United States poorly educated. Newcomers tend to split into highly skilled professionals on the one hand, and immigrants with lower educational attainment on the other. In the 1980s, the proportion of professionals and technicians among legal immigrants reached approximately 25%, higher than the proportion in the native-born labor force (Portes and Rumbaut, 1990, p. 10). In fact, "the wide occupational diversity among the foreign born conceals . . . a bimodal pattern in which certain groups concentrate at the top of the occupational distribution while others are found mostly at the bottom" (ibid, p. 68).

## Education and the Changing Economy

Throughout our history, immigrants and refugees have performed the agricultural, janitorial, health care, child care, and other low-paying jobs that U.S. citizens disdain (Boyle, 1999). In many cases immigrants are specifically recruited to meet a shortage of labor in particular areas, as, for example, Filipina nurses who have recently been brought to the United States. One or two centuries ago, "skilled mechanics had been recruited . . . from England, Scotland, and Germany to jump-start America's fledgling textile, shoe, and metalworking factories"; at the turn of the twentieth century, "the shortages of trained native-born candidates induced some companies to seek out trained scientists from Europe" to work in communications, energy, and manufacturing (Aronowitz, 2000, pp. 18-19).

Because of changes in the economic base during the twentieth century, unskilled immigrants can no longer rely exclusively on farm or factory jobs that require low literacy skills (Greider, 1997). In the last decades of the twentieth century in the United States, the economic base shifted from agriculture and manufacturing to a predominantly service economy. "For most of the last twenty years, . . . the globalization of production was eliminating U.S. jobs and depressing wages" (ibid., p. 72). According to Aronowitz, "in the last quarter century, the United States economy has lost some nine million relatively well paid factory jobs" (2000, p. 29). In fact, "after 1980, the automobile industry, once a bellwether, had shed a third of its employees; steel jobs were cut by two thirds; and the leading production industries, textiles and apparel, lost a million workers,

or half their payrolls" (ibid., p. 35). Despite the resulting unemployment in the 1980s and 1990s, native-born Americans were more selective about the jobs they would accept than were immigrants. "It is uncomfortable, perhaps, to acknowledge publicly that in many cases, immigrants are taking the jobs that more established Americans refuse to do" (Ungar, 1995, p. 23).

Both Greider (1997) and Hull (1997) note the propensity of politicians and business leaders to blame globalization on workers themselves, claiming that they lack the requisite literacy skills for the jobs they had successfully performed for years. But the "enchanted workplaces" that remain after globalization, supposedly sites of more meaningful work in which workers share responsibility with management (Gee, Hull, and Lankshear, 1996, p. 25), require higher educational levels. Because more responsibility devolves onto workers they must command greater workplace literacy. For example, they must deal with "international certification standards [that] require that manufacturing process instructions be written, read, and communicated in English" (Hull, 1997, p. xiv). Thus in the new economy, Greider points out, "Government and business leaders delivered a reassuring lecture to working people: They will survive and flourish in the global economy once they have acquired higher skills" (1997, p. 73).

Yet these "higher skills" are not equally available to all. Brandt's research demonstrates "how the cultural and social organization of a particular economy creates reservoirs of opportunity and constraint from which individuals take their literacy" (1999, p. 381). For many immigrants, this literacy depends on English proficiency. "Not being able to speak English means not being able to defend yourself in the workplace when

you're accused of a mistake, and most importantly, it means a greatly reduced chance of promotion, even when you do your current job very well" (Hull, 1997, p. xiv). Unlike some earlier waves, most of today's immigrants do not speak English when they arrive in the United States. Thus education, especially in language and literacy, has become increasingly important for the majority of immigrants seeking to achieve the American dream. (It is important not to overstate the value of education to economic success. Critics of the rhetoric calling for increased education levels as a response to economic change note that the majority of new jobs are being created in the service sector rather than in managerial and professional occupations [see Brill, 1999; Rothstein, 1999].)

Indeed "language has often been cited as the principal initial barrier confronting recent immigrants, from the least educated peasants to the most educated professionals" (Portes and Rumbaut, 1990, p. 181). The educational field promises to teach English and other academic proficiencies that learners need to pursue education, job training, and employment. As adults, immigrant students of English bring a multitude of life experiences, goals, and hopes. They constitute part of the body of "nontraditional" students, learners whose age, race, class, ethnic and national origin, and religion characterize them as "different" from the traditional conception of college students as 18-to-22-years old, middle-class, mainly Christian, native English speakers. Adult immigrant/refugee students seek English classes at the workplace, in religious and community organizations, and in community colleges. Because of high demand for English classes, in cities such as Boston newcomers must often wait as long as three years to enter free or low-cost ESL classes at community-based organizations.

Community colleges also provide ESL courses to immigrants, usually those intending to pursue higher education.

At their best community colleges have fostered the dreams of a variety of students who lacked access to four-year colleges and universities for reasons including class, race, ethnicity, and gender. Therefore, the community college is sometimes cast as a pivotal institution that allows access to higher education for a wide range of learners. But the complex and contradictory missions of the community college can complicate the paths that learners travel toward their goals. As a societal institution the community college represents one point of entry to an understanding of how the values and interests of a state and a culture manifest themselves in the lived experiences of individual people.

This dissertation examines the experiences of the immigrant students and instructor in one basic writing course at a community college, Basic Writing 3 (BW3). Indeed immigrant and refugee students are forming an increasingly large presence at community colleges (Arenson, 1998). As the vast majority of the students in BW3 were nonnative speakers of English (NNS) the college treated it as an English as a second language course. But the course was technically classified as a Basic Education course that was not limited to ESL students. This initial tension leads to some of the issues of importance, including how the community college and its staff construe ESL students, especially against the current historical backdrop, and the effects that such constructions can have. The dissertation examines the experiences of the instructor and students in BW3. Understanding what happens within the classroom can alert us to possibilities for change in instructional practices and materials as well as in teacher education and

institutional policies. In addition, the study undertakes analysis on the institutional level and considers the role of the community college in the world of higher education.

Typically, community colleges include academic, vocational, and "remedial" programs. Basic education and ESL programs usually are located in noncredit divisions such as the Alternative Learning Division of the college under study here. In many cases, such courses are supported by state and federal grant funds that allow these courses to be offered free or at a nominal cost. At the same time, however, adult education courses often result in dropout rates of 50% or higher, especially for ESL students. The causes of these dropout rates are many and varied. Adult learners face a number of obstacles to persisting in school: the demands of work—often of multiple jobs; family responsibilities; feelings of inadequacy; unfamiliarity with educational institutions; and a lack of information and counseling about available options. As we will see, students' experiences in their courses also play a role in whether they stay or go.

The ability to communicate orally and in writing is considered increasingly necessary in this era of global capitalism. Frequently community college students enroll first in basic education courses meant to prepare them to continue in college, where academic writing functions as a primary gatekeeper. If students do not receive instruction in college-level composition using the topics and genres of academic disciplines (Raimes, 1996) they will be handicapped in later university courses. Indeed, in many universities students must take writing examinations even to enter degree-granting programs and freshman composition classes (Shaughnessy, 1997). For these reasons basic English composition courses, ideally, should teach the academic literacies and discourses that will enable students to undertake college-level work (Purves, 1988).

Yet for second language learners, learning to write in a new language is not a neutral proposition. It requires more than plugging the vocabulary and grammatical structures of the target language into a universal rhetorical model. Rather, cultures express their own values, styles, and expectations for writers and readers in aspects such as rhetorical structures, forms of argumentation, uses of evidence, and citing of authorities (Kaplan, 1966; Leki, 1991). Learning these features raises important issues of acculturation: students' gains and losses often challenge their worldviews and personal and cultural values.

My interest in these difficult issues related to acculturation and writing originally led me to ask how ESL students grapple with the curriculum of western-style argumentation in English composition. I wanted to compare students' experiences with writing in a second language at two different yet connected institutions: an internationally renowned university and a local two-year technical college.[1] The initial research questions were:

- How does the process of becoming proficient in the discourses and practices that allow ESL students to become authentic members of the

[1] The names of the location, institutions, and participants in this study are pseudonyms.

academic community occur at Monroe Technical College and the University of the Midwest?

- How do students meet with, adopt, and resist the curriculum of academic writing and, in particular, argumentation?
- How do the class, gender, race, and ethnicity of the ESL students at these institutions contribute to or hinder the process of learning academic writing?

But it soon became clear that few points of comparison existed between the courses at these two institutions. For this reason I restricted the focus of my inquiry to the community college alone. However, unexpected events occurred at MTC. Second, within weeks, students began to flee the course. First, the enacted curriculum of Basic Writing 3 touched only lightly on academic argumentation. Ultimately 75% of them dropped out of the course or the college. A variety of factors contributed to this outcome: students' multiple goals and varying educational backgrounds; the instructor's part-time status and lack of support from the institution; the enacted curriculum of BW3; and the division's reliance on part-time instructors to provide extra-curricular services to students. Given these conditions, the research questions evolved into the following:

- What were the lived experiences of an ESL composition class in a community college?
- What factors contributed to the relative success or failure of the class?
- How did the events of the course affect students' future educational or occupational experiences?

- For those students with academic aspirations, how did the curriculum and the students' own experiences prepare them to transfer to academic or training programs?

## Backdrop: The Community College

Two-year colleges have publicly stated a variety of competing and conflicting goals, but their primary stated purpose has historically been to provide students with an "open door" to the U.S. system of higher education. Since the inception of junior colleges early in the twentieth century (Brint and Karabel, 1989) their sometimes contradictory objectives have included providing high school dropouts with a "second chance" at education; training workers for specific occupations (Paris, 1985); protecting the prestige of four-year institutions by diverting lower-status students (Brint and Karabel, 1989); lessening students' aspirations (Clark, 1960, 1980) by channeling them away from academic tracks; and absorbing surplus labor (Aronowitz, 2000; Shor, 1980). In the past 30 years growth in community colleges has been astronomical. The number of students in them has now surpassed 5.5 million (Tinberg, 1999, p. 52), up from 4.5 million in 1980 and 1.6 million in 1970 (Brint and Karabel, 1989, p. 127). As an institution that focuses on offering service to students rather than producing academic knowledge, especially because of "open-door" policies that admit lower-status students, the community college holds subordinate status in the world of colleges and universities (Keith, 1999). Within the college itself, teaching "remedial" service courses in basic writing and English as a Second Language (ESL) also holds subordinated status. "For many [practitioners] at the

university level, a focus on composition [is] the equivalent to a professional backwater" (Nystrand and Duffy, 1997, p. 13). Remedial or basic skills education often defines its task as providing students with the specific skills necessary to college success. Yet seeing composition as a "skill," Rose points out, "is to place it in the realm of the technical, and in the current, research-ascendant American university, that is the kiss of death" (1985, p. 347).

The reasons for the importance of remedial courses in the community college are historical. The 1960s boom in community colleges resulted from both the post-war rush to higher education and the demands of racial and ethnic minorities (Brint and Karabel, 1989; Soldatenko, in press). Although junior or community colleges were already teaching "underprepared" students as part of their "second chance" mission, ESL became part of remedial education as a result of the influx Puerto Ricans and other nonnative speakers of English:

> The two-year institutions thus became the major point of entry into the system of higher education for recent immigrants: for Cubans in Florida, Asians in California, Puerto Ricans in the Mid-Atlantic states, and Mexican-Americans in the Southwest. . . . By the late 1970s, the major subordinate racial minorities, including blacks, were disproportionately concentrated in two-year institutions. (Brint and Karabel, 1989, p.127).

Thus, from an early start second language instruction and basic writing were intertwined in the community college.

## Three Categories of Newcomers

Both historically and currently the composition of immigrant populations has shifted according to the vagaries of geopolitical situations—religious and political persecution, "natural" disasters, war and colonization, and economic deprivation. Compared with previous centuries, immigrants today tend to be people of color. "Unlike the older flows, today's immigrants are drawn not from Europe but overwhelmingly from the developing nations of the Third World, especially from Asia and Latin America. The heterogeneous composition of the earlier European waves pales in comparison to the current diversity" (Portes and Rumbaut, 1990, p. xvii).

Geopolitical situations complicate such generalizations, however, as witness the exodus of central Europeans such as Bosnians and Kosovars fleeing war and of Jews seeking religious tolerance who were allowed to leave Russia after the fall of the Berlin Wall. These examples lead us to the distinction between immigrants and refugees, which becomes important to understanding the educational backgrounds and aspirations of those entering the United States. The Immigration and Naturalization Service of the U.S. government identifies refugees:

> Every year millions of people around the world are displaced by war, famine, and civil and political unrest. Others are forced to flee their countries in order to escape the risk of death and torture at the hands of persecutors. The United States (U.S.) works with other governmental, international, and private organizations to provide food, health care, and shelter to millions of refugees throughout the world. In addition, the United States considers persons for resettlement to the U.S. as refugees. Those admitted must be of special humanitarian concern and demonstrate that they were persecuted, or have a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. (Immigration and Naturalization Service, 2000).

In contrast, many who enter the United States are considered economic immigrants seeking a better life. While these people may not be fleeing persecution or armed conflict per se, the colonial and postcolonial relationships between the United States and many countries from which immigrants come partially blur the distinctions between the categories of 'immigrant' and 'refugee'. For example, even before the 1993 passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the 1994 Mexican fiscal crisis, thousands of Mexicans each year entered the United States illegally in search of work. In fact, in the 1980s "Mexico [was] the source of over 95 percent of unauthorized aliens apprehended in the United States" (Portes and Rumbaut, 1990, p. 11). In 1997 Mexico remained the country of origin for 27 percent of the total foreign-born population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000), both documented and undocumented.

In addition to refugees and immigrants, many international students come to the United States for the quality of its universities and the status of its brand of English. Although these students must obtain student or scholar visas in advance of arrival and must pay university tuition, some of them also take advantage of educational opportunities that are technically restricted to U.S. citizens or permanent residents, such as free English courses at community colleges. The cultural capital of international students enables them to skirt the rules that prohibit their entry into courses such as the one under study here. Furthermore, many international students end their academic stints at U.S. universities by staying in the country and finding professional jobs. For example, "in 1987, foreign-born students collected 55 percent of all doctoral degrees in

engineering awarded by U.S. universities, *most staying to live in America"* (Portes and Rumbaut, 1990, p. 212; emphasis added).

## Educational Attainment of Newcomers

The bimodal trend in immigrant populations has important implications for questions of immigrant education. Although many refugees, particularly those from countries wracked by long-term conflicts, have had little opportunity for education, some refugees such as Russians have earned M.D. and Ph.D. degrees in their home countries. Depending on their professional training and English proficiency levels, they may or may not be able to resume practicing their professions in the United States.

As for immigrants, the stereotype is often that they have attained low educational levels. But immigrants often have higher educational attainment levels than their compatriots who remain at home. In terms of documented Mexican immigrants, for example, "those with at least some secondary education have been estimated by four different studies to hover around 30 percent while only 21 percent had reached similar schooling in the Mexican population" (Portes and Rumbaut, 1990, p. 11). This fact bears out the findings of Graff's study of literacy in three cities in Ontario, Canada, in the 1860s. The "migrants to these cities, and probably to places throughout North America, were selected individuals whose rate of literacy was higher than that found among those living in their birth places, regardless of origins, age, or sex" (Graff, 1979, p. 65). Literacy may be an indicator of other attributes of immigrants:

> Most of these new immigrants, of course, like those who came before them, are self-selected. Legal or not, they tend to be the adventurers, the risk takers, the strong of mind and body who can cope with being uprooted and landing in a totally new environment. (Ungar, 1995, p. 23)

Economic immigrants also include groups of highly skilled professional workers from countries such as Taiwan and India, the source of many of California's high technology workers. In the 1980s, for example, of legal immigrants, "immigrant professionals represented around 25 percent of the total, at a time when professionals and technicians amounted to no more than 18 percent of the American labor force" (Portes and Rumbaut, 1990, p. 9). Many of these technical elites arrive with some proficiency in English as well as a high level of professional and specialized knowledge.

## Geographic Destinations of Newcomers

The vagaries of geopolitical situations also are played out in the regions of the United States to which immigrants and refugees migrate. Logically, proximity influences migration patterns; hence the influx of Mexicans and Central Americans to the southwest and Haitians to the east coast. Established footholds such as the Cuban community in south Florida exert a strong pull on newcomers from the same country. "Although four states—California, New York, Florida, and Texas—accounted for two-thirds of the immigrants in 1990, the new arrivals settle in many other places, too, and they are not all concentrated in the big cities" (Ungar, 1995, p. 27). In some cases religious organizations such as the Lutheran church have played a role, for example, in bringing Hmong refugees to the upper Midwest. Although these immigrants are different in many respects from

earlier waves, "similarities include the predominantly urban destination of most newcomers, their concentration in a few port cities, and their willingness to accept the lowest paid jobs" (Portes and Rumbaut, 1990, p. 7).

## The English Classroom

This brief exploration into the categories of refugees, immigrants, and visitors such as international students hints at the complexities to come in understanding BW3. In the English language classroom these various groups occupy a heterogeneous site that Pratt (1991, 1993) calls the "contact zone" among people of different cultures, genders, races, religions, and socioeconomic status. In understanding the contact zone, she proposes, "class, ethnic, and gender differences would be analyzed not in terms of people's memberships in particular communities but in terms of the production and reproduction of those differences in the socially structured *contact* between groups bound together in their separateness" (1993, p. 88, emphasis original). It is helpful to consider BW3 in light of this observation, as it allows an idea of the relations among and between the students and the instructor, their personal histories and hoped-for futures, as the human embodiments of the effects of global political encounters.

The historical perspective highlights the timeless themes of immigration—culture shock, anxiety, hope—as well as those that have changed over time depending on ever-shifting political and economic situations. From pedagogical and administrative perspectives, though, the contact zone presents major challenges. How can one instructor (in this case, working part-time) account for the disparate backgrounds, academic

achievements and needs, and future goals of such a wide range of adult learners? In what ways can the curriculum account for the disparate backgrounds and goals of students? How can an institution administer effective programs for students who rarely share the same goals, and whose academic preparation cannot be relied upon or sometimes even assessed?

For students at the community college a number of issues become salient. Students need to juggle work and family responsibilities; expectations and goals in the light of their own confidence about their abilities; differential qualities and quantities of guidance counseling; variable familiarity with and access to resources such as computers; and sometimes hazy notions about what might be required to realize their dreams. The reality that students confront may include isolation from both U.S. society and immigrant communities; fellow students with different goals and reasons for taking English courses; high dropout rates; overworked instructors; insufficient resources, even if courses are offered for free; uninformed expectations on the part of their instructors and the institution; and insufficient scaffolding into the academic setting. On the positive side, however, some ESL community college students do benefit from the programs and resources made available to them and go on to complete vocational or academic programs successfully.

Across the board at community colleges, for all students the transfer rate to four-year colleges and universities remains near 20% (Aronowitz, 2000; Dougherty, 1994). Thus it is the exception rather than the rule for any student to follow the community college pathway to this academic end. Yet the fact that this pathway exists and that the

public rhetoric of the community college and the state apparatuses support it, makes the questions worth posing: *If community colleges are to fulfill the promises they make to educate the public—including immigrants and refugees—what are students' experiences in the institution?*

## The Chapters of the Dissertation

This Introduction has provided an overview of the complex issues and the varied players on the field of "remedial" second-language composition at the community college. Chapter 2 reviews the literatures in a number of related disciplines that inform this study: critical educational theory, the history of community colleges, and second language acquisition and composition. The dissertation is situated at the nexus of these disciplines and benefits from drawing on all of them. Chapter 3 presents the methodology used to undertake the research. The qualitative methods used for gathering data included ethnographic observations, interviews, and document-gathering. The methods used for analysis of the data included various types of discourse analysis as well as qualitative analysis based in grounded theory. Critical curriculum theory underlies the application of all of these methods. Chapter 4 offers a description of the research site, Monroe Technical College, the participants in the semester-long study, including students, instructor, and administrators at the college, and the events of the semester.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 undertake various types of data analysis. Chapter 5 analyzes discourses circulating at the institution and explores their effects on the participants in the study. Chapter 6 begins by examining the overt curriculum of BW3 course, focusing on

the way in which it "recontextualizes" the larger writing curriculum for ESL students. Chapter 7 analyzes the hidden curriculum of the writing course and the institution, which conveyed multiple messages to the ESL students about their roles in the college and in society at large. Students manifested resistance to both curricula in multiple ways, most obviously by dropping out.

Chapter 8 is an epilogue, presenting data gathered in interviews with students a year after the original study. It confirms the ways in which cultural and social capital operate to accrue more benefits to those who already possess them. This chapter also explores the ways students negotiated the contact zone of the ESL writing classroom. Chapter 9 concludes the dissertation with a summary of the findings, a discussion of their implications, and directions for future research and practice.

## CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study is based on research and theoretical literature on critical curriculum theory, the community college, and first and second language composition studies. First I situate it in theories from critical theory, curriculum studies, and the sociology of education. Next follows a survey of the history and role of the community college in the United States grounded in the critical principles described in the first section. As academic literacies are important keys to success in higher education they are directly connected to the issues of access discussed in the third section. I therefore include a discussion of composition theories, especially those related to teaching basic and second language writers. Finally I consider the uses and situations of part-time faculty of ESL/composition, whose institutional role has a significant bearing on the instruction that occurs within the community college classroom.

### Critical Curriculum Theory

The study is grounded in critical curriculum theory, which draws from critical theory, curriculum studies, and the sociology of education to examine the ways in which social goods and power are distributed in society especially in the educational apparatus, which is a source both of mechanisms of reproduction of

> the existing social order and of possibilities for resistance and social change. Education is a crucial locus of the rhetorical and actual expressions of society's economic structures, values, histories, and hopes for the future. Despite the prevailing myth that the United States is a classless society—or one composed almost entirely of the middle class—socioeconomic distinctions are visible in all aspects of the educational system: selection of curricular content; forms of evaluation; the spatial and temporal structures of the school, and the relations between the instructor and students. Social class counts as both a position grounded in the economy (Apple, 1982; Wright, 1982) and as a trajectory (Bourdieu, 1984) that recognizes the value and utility of education to students' goals and future plans. Yet recognition of the importance of social class is often missing from educational research. Apple points out that "most ethnographers ignore the fact that schools do not sit isolated from the local and national political economies, from class, race, and gender structures, from the accumulation and legitimation needs of the state" (1983, p. viii).
>
> Moreover, both public discussions of education and of the schools themselves tend to remain silent on issues of class, as Kozol notes, because such discussion is "interdicted by the pretense of political neutrality" (1985, p. 49). Although they have been justly criticized for an overly deterministic view that allows little possibility for agency on the part of students and teachers (Apple, 1985), Bowles and Gintis usefully summarize some of the important functions of schooling to reproduce socioeconomic structures and relations:
>
> Education in the United States plays a dual role in the social process whereby surplus value, i.e., profit, is created and expropriated. On the one hand, by imparting technical and social skills and appropriate motivations, education increases the productive capacity of workers. On the other hand, education helps defuse and depoliticize the potentially explosive class relations of the production process and thus serves to perpetuate the social, political, and economic conditions through which a portion of the product of labor is expropriated in the form of profits. (1976, p. 11)

The educational system has evolved to serve and perpetuate the middle class, meeting the demands and values of capital. As Freire and Macedo explain, "It was not middle-class education that created or molded the middle class, but the middle class, that, in coming to power, had the power to systematize its education" (1987, p. 38). For this reason middle-class values are expressed in the modes of speech and habits of conduct and work that are most recognized in the schools and other societal institutions as carrying the highest status and amount of power. The notion of a hidden curriculum (Jackson, 1968), which socializes students into the habits and work patterns that meet the needs of capital, although initially associated with overly deterministic reproduction theories, has regained recognition in recent years. As the needs of capital have evolved with globalization, hidden curricula have likewise changed form.

## Resistance Theory

The power of the schools to reproduce and impose middle-class values is not monolithic, however. Students, teacher, and administrators interact with each other and with outside social forces and social agents in ways that are not preprogrammed. To Weis, "schools are seen as sites where culture and ideologies are produced in ongoing interactions rather than places where ideologies are imposed upon students. . . . Ideological hegemony is never secure" (1985, p. 7). Theories of resistance account for these interactions, showing that the exercise of power is not a one-way process. Giroux argues that "schools represent arenas of contestation and struggle among differentially empowered cultural and economic groups" (1983, p. 74). Apple (1986) points to the active and passive ways in which female teachers resist the forces attempting to deskill their work, likening such resistance to that of craft and trade workers fighting the speeding up of the production processes. Chapter 6 of this study discusses the various ways in which the students in Basic Writing 3 resisted the overt and hidden curricula. It also considers the instructor's actions as "defensive teaching" (McNeil, 1986), a quite different form of resistance to the institutional structures and policies.

The studies of Linda McNeil (1986) and Robert Everhart (1983) describe many kinds of resistance in education. McNeil's study of high school teachers demonstrated that physical factors such as insufficient textbooks and shared classrooms reduced the teachers' sense of ownership over their environments. These teachers turned to control of their students in the face of this lack of control over their surroundings. As a result they sacrificed their expectations of what students could achieve to their desire to maintain control over students' actions. The teachers relied on lecturing and student seatwork to help maintain control; thus their pedagogies contributed to their own professional deskilling. Students resisted the forms of control imposed by their teachers in silent and active ways whose immediate effects varied depending on student-teacher relationships. McNeil explains the overall result: "Where knowledge control is used as a form of classroom control, alienation increases for all participants, further reinforcing patterns of control" (1986, p. 188). She characterizes this pattern of teacher work as "defensive teaching," "choosing modes of presentation and evaluation that they hope will make their workload more efficient and create as little student resistance as possible" (p. 158). Defensive teaching is a form of resistance adopted by the teachers to unsupportive working conditions. Yet like Willis (1977), McNeil discovered that "the possibilities for resistance . . . will not all be emancipatory. Some will only further entrap the individuals involved and reinforce administrative controls" (1986, p. 17). McNeil's study complicated ideas about resistance in interesting ways by including teachers as agents of resistance to the structures and policies of the school.

At the junior high level, Everhart's study demonstrated that defensive teaching often manifests itself as control over the form rather than the content of student work. He described one teacher of the group of boys he studied who "appeared excessively authoritarian, unbending, and insistent on exactness for every paper or project. It had to be done his way ('right') or not at all, and most of the students resisted such an uncompromising position and reacted against it" (1983, p. 171). The junior high students

were notable in devising forms of resistance, which included testing the limits with teachers, talking under their breath while doing classroom assignments, and carefully selecting when to skip class. Both McNeil and Everhart show resistance as a reasonable response to unreasonable forms of control exerted to unreasonable extents. As with Willis's (1977) study of working-class "lads" in Britain, such resistance had positive and negative effects on both students and teachers.

## Race, Gender, and Class

Class is not the only important social construct to use in educational theorizing. It is also necessary to keep in mind the multiple relationships among race, gender, and class. As Frow notes,

> The category of gender for example must be taken as overdetermining every aspect of every area of class relations. Within the production process it operates to organize the division of labor by determining what counts and what doesn't count as a skill and then to assign valued skills to men and devalued skills to women. (1993, p. 252)

An analogous process often occurs in considering which types of work (and education) are suitable for people of different races and genders and who constitutes the classes under discussion. In education, for example, women make up the majority of teachers at the elementary level, men the minority. This proportion reverses at the level of higher education (Apple, 1986). Apple further notes,

> For example, over 60 percent of the people within the working class in the United States are women. If we then add African American men to this, the total is two-thirds. Thus nearly 70 percent of working-class positions in the United States are occupied by women and people of color. (Apple, 1995b, p. 77)

It is also important to note, as Weis does (1985), that the vast majority of college faculty are white, and that gender and race disparities exist among faculty in academic disciplines.

To cope with the inevitable tensions that arise from inequitable distribution of economic goods the government seeks legitimacy by absorbing the demands of women and minorities for education and other services. Weis notes that "increased access to education is a political response to racial contest in the state sector" (1995, p. 10). What occurs after access has been gained, however, usually becomes subject to less public scrutiny than the laws and policies that regulate admission. With the rise of the community college, those inside and outside of the middle class continue to see higher education as a path to the American dream. To Mike Rose's remedial students at UCLA, for example, one aspect of the American dream was that "education held the power to equalize things" (Rose, 1989, p. 137). (Actually, for the middle class higher education is an assumed necessity.) Aronowitz explains, "the community college has become increasingly important as an ideological institution insofar as it fulfills, if only in the bureaucratic sense, the promise of higher education for all" (2000, p. 56). Whether or not

the educational system teaches important or useful knowledge, its credentialing function remains prominent.

## Sociological Theories of Education

Despite the complicating effects of resistance, the reproductive forces of the educational system continue to be effective. The task for critical educational researchers is to understand the mechanisms by which these effects occur on both micro- and macro-levels. How does the educational apparatus, for example, assimilate or socialize immigrants into the American social and economic systems? What allows some immigrants to achieve the "American dream" and others to remain in oppressive living and work conditions? Understanding is made possible by use of the theories of scholars such as Apple, Bourdieu, Freire, and others mentioned here. Gee's characterization of British sociologist Basil Bernstein would apply in some ways to these theorists as well:

> Bernstein is ultimately a sociologist of the construction, transmission, and acquisition of knowledge, or, better put, multiple knowledges constructed in diverse contexts, relationships, institutions, societies, and cultures. He is primarily concerned with "boundary work", that is, how economic, social, cultural, historical, and institutional forces create boundaries and in the act create categories of knowledge and categories of knowers, with profound social and political consequences. (1999b, ms. p. 6).

In this "boundary work" Bernstein seeks to establish a framework (a structure) with which to examine the educational apparatus as it regulates people's differing access to the "distribution of knowledge" and other societal resources, specifically according to social class (1996, p. 8). As Apple puts it, "For Bernstein, the issue of the relationship between class and culture concerns the distribution of power and how this is reflected in the principle of control between social groups" (1995b, p. 66). His theories of the structural relations between agents within the educational system are best supported by empirical evidence of the detailed interactions that comprise such interactions and relations. "Bernstein's analysis of the social-class assumptions of pedagogic practice is the foundation for linking microeducational processes to the macrosociological levels of social structure and class and power relations" (Sadovnik, 1995, p. 14). Clarifying the relationship between an immediate situation and larger patterns thus takes on a fundamentally liberatory nature. As Gee discusses Bernstein's work:

> These larger "macro-level" forces and relationships shape or mold human ways of thinking and feeling and social interactions. . . . In turn, these "micro-level" moments of situated thinking, feeling, and social interaction have the creative capacity to transform the larger "macro-level" forces shaping them. Indeed, it is one of Bernstein's primary

goals to show how the macro and micro reflexively shape each other and how macro-level social, institutional, and cultural forces leave room for change, transformation, and resistance. In fact, he points to the tension points in macro-level institutional forces that are the key points of leverage where effective change is liable to occur. (1999b, ms. p 5)

My study shares Bernstein's ambition of analyzing the micro-level experiences of students and instructor in relation to the macro-level forces at work in the institution. To analyze the classroom discourse data gathered in this study I use Bernstein's notion of the pedagogic device and the codes of classification/framing. To Bernstein pedagogic relations occur not only in school but also in other cultural institutions and settings such as medicine and religion. "The pedagogic device generates a symbolic ruler of consciousness" (Bernstein, 1990, p. 180), regulating behavior inside and outside the school. It "is the condition for the production, reproduction, and transformation of culture," which acts as the fulcrum "between power and knowledge, and knowledge and forms of consciousness" (p. 181). The pedagogic device "provides the intrinsic grammar of pedagogic discourse through *distributive rules, recontextualizing rules, and rules of evaluation. . . .*" (p. 180, emphasis original). I discuss these rules in more detail as I apply them to the data in Chapter 6. Sadovnik notes that "in the 1970s Bernstein began to develop what has become the central foundation of his sociology of schooling, the concepts of classification and framing, as a way to more precisely specify the model of transmission in the schools" (1995, p. 26). I apply the concept of classification rules (the 'what', as Sadovnik calls it) to the boundaries drawn between native and nonnative

speakers of English, and the curricula on offer to them in the community college. Likewise I use framing rules (the 'how') to examine the pedagogical practice in Basic Writing 3 to demonstrate the instructor's uses of control in the classroom.

Habitus and Forms of Capital

Like Bernstein the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu is concerned with how knowledge and power are transmitted through societal institutions, including the school. Bourdieu calls the family the "primary social unit" (1998, p. 107), which fosters the socialization of its offspring well before they reach school. He sees the family existing not so much in a social class but in social space, which he defines as "a space of difference, in which classes exist in some sense in a state of virtuality, not as something given but as *something to be done*" (1998, p. 12, emphasis original). In other words social class remains an important concept, but it is enacted in the habitus, which is a set of bodily habits, social dispositions, and imprecise knowledge, a "generative and unifying principle which retranslates the relational characteristics of a position into a unitary lifestyle, that is, a unitary set of choices of persons, good, practices" (1998, p. 8). These choices are initially made by the family, which determines the involvement of its children in institutions such as schools, churches, and social groups. The elegance of the notion of habitus is that it accounts for the development on an individual and family level of the awkward concept of class. Class as a construct is difficult to pin down: Defining criteria such as income, race, occupation, or religion shift over time and in different contexts. The

notion of habitus encompasses all of these and more, allowing for the changing preferences of social groups but maintaining the transmissive process.

> An important related concept of Bourdieu's is the notion of forms of capital: economic, cultural, and symbolic. Analogous to economic capital in its exchange value, cultural capital is a currency again derived from the family, although it is available from other sources such as the school. To Bourdieu, "families are corporate bodies [with] a tendency to perpetuate their social being, with all its power and privileges, which is at the basis of reproductive strategies" (1998, p. 19), including educational strategies. As the economic capital of a family increases the relative value of its cultural capital gains more importance to it. For this reason, for example, parents who can pay tuition at private universities are likely to prefer sending their children to Ivy League universities because there is more cultural capital to be gained there than at equally expensive but less prestigious schools. As McDonough notes,
>
> > Although all classes have their own forms of cultural capital, the most socially and economically valued forms are those possessed by the middle and upper classes, which are transmitted to their offspring as a supplement to economic capital in order to maintain class status and privilege across generations (1998, p. 183)

As important as the ideas of habitus and cultural capital are here, they are especially useful in studying students from diverse cultural backgrounds. In such study, making comparisons solely on the basis of socioeconomic status is less illuminating than examining the workings of imported forms of capital in a new country. Indeed "one of the dimensions of symbolic capital, in differentiated societies, is ethnic identity, which, with names or skin color, is a *percipi*, a being-perceived, functioning as positive or negative symbolic capital" (Bourdieu, 1998, p. 104). Although ethnic identity may not change when one immigrates to a new country, the symbolic value of, for example, being black in Africa is considerably different from that of being black in the United States. By the same token the symbolic capital of knowing the rituals and conventions of higher

education, although they may vary in some aspects from one country to another, carries its value through the process of immigration.

This section has touched upon aspects of critical curriculum theory and sociology of education that are especially useful for analyzing the data in this study. The community college presents a fertile terrain of study for the issues of access, credentials, race, gender, and class discussed above.

## The Community College

Community colleges were first known as junior colleges, "designed expressly as a community service and vocational venture in direct opposition to the scholarly curricula of the universities" (Collins, 1979, p. 127). From the first community college established as such in 1901 in Joliet, Illinois (Dougherty, 1994), the number of community colleges across the nation grew rapidly until the 1980s. After World War II the GI Bill of 1944 promised thousands of returning veterans access to higher education. This legislation was designed to reward military service while diverting surplus labor from the economy to prevent the return of the unemployment and social conflicts of the Great Depression that the war had absorbed. In the 1960s the Johnson Administration used education "as a key weapon in its War on Poverty," supporting the growth of community colleges to the extent that "by late in the decade, a new community college opened every week" (Nystrand and Duffy, 1997, p. 10). By 1980 more than 4.5 million students were enrolled in community colleges (Brint and Karabel, 1989, p. 127). In fact, since the 1970s more students have begun their college careers at two-year community colleges than at four-year colleges and universities (Brint and Karabel, 1989, p. v; see also Culp and Helfgot,

1998). In higher education overall the ratio of students at two-year colleges continues to rise, reaching almost 40% in 1996 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1999).

This growth in community colleges came in response to a combination of forces. As formal educational credentials grew increasingly necessary to the U.S. economy, parents and students demanded access to higher education. Business and industry also needed educated middle-level workers:

> Local business strongly supported the community college in part because it shared the general interest in educational opportunity. But three other interests were as or more important: securing publicly subsidized employee training, fostering local economic development, and burnishing local pride. (Dougherty, 1994, p. 134)

> Local school and other government officials were highly motivated to press for the establishment of community colleges to meet the needs of business, the demands of families, and their own self-interest (Dougherty, 1994). They were supported by state universities and legislatures and other governmental agencies, which acted from a range of motives including diverting students from state universities and responding to the pressures of constituents. The growth in community colleges continued to affect the national economy. "All those who build, operate or attend community college are drawn away from the mechanized arenas of industry and agriculture, which can now overproduce with less and less labor" (Shor, 1980, p. 5).

The tremendous postwar growth in the construction of community colleges and student enrollments in them was such that "many university presidents feared their institutions would be overwhelmed" (Brint and Karabel, 1989, p. 35) if students transferred into four-year colleges. But community colleges diverted students from elite institutions, protecting their primarily research mission and allowing them to maintain the education they offered to elite, well-prepared students. However, although many students

carry the goal of transferring to four-year colleges or universities, transfer rates remain relatively low. "On average only 23.5 percent transfer successfully, and when the focus is on urban community colleges the rate drops to about 11 percent" (Trujillo and Diaz, 1999, p. 125). In fact, students who begin at community colleges tend to be disadvantaged in earning bachelor's degrees in comparison with those who take time off after high school and later enroll in four-year institutions (Dougherty, 1994). With low transfer rates of students to four-year institutions, community colleges provided society with, in Clark's term, a "cooling-out process" for students that simultaneously prevented a labor surplus and attempted to placate increasingly demanding students (1960).

The development of the three-tiered system of public education in California exemplified this function, becoming a national model for managing open admissions (Brint and Karabel, 1989, p. 89). The top 12 percent of California's high school students could attend flagship universities such as Berkeley; the middle group could enroll in the state colleges; and the lowest-ranked students were offered the local community colleges, with their "high flunk-out rates" (Shor, 1980, p. xv). Educational leaders held no illusions about the desired results of this plan. As California thus increased access to higher education, Clark Kerr, then-president of the state system, explicitly stated, "Mass and universal access to higher education can make it possible for the elite sector to become more elite" [and] "help to soften class distinctions and antagonisms" (quoted in Brint and Karabel, 1989, p. 87).

In sum the competing missions of the community college include:

- training workers for specific occupations (Paris, 1985) rather than offering a purely liberal arts education

- providing access to higher education for students who otherwise would not have such an opportunity (Rendon, 1999)
- offering high school dropouts a second chance at education
- protecting the prestige of four-year institutions by accepting lower-status students (Brint and Karabel, 1989)
- "cooling out" students' aspirations (Clark, 1960, 1980) by diverting them from academic to vocational goals or from bachelor's degrees to associate's degrees
- propagating "a meritocratic ideology, a critical piece of the body of beliefs which sustains capitalist social relations" (Ryan and Sackrey, 1984, p.112), in which students adjust their emotions about being "cooled out" by seeing themselves as incapable of succeeding at the university
- absorbing surplus labor (Shor, 1980) by providing occupations for instructors, support staff and other workers, and students themselves.

The Curriculum: Academic or Vocational?

Almost immediately after the founding of community colleges, an ongoing struggle developed over whether their focus would be academic or vocational. In other words the competing missions of the community college represented "the confounding of education and training" (Brown and Clignet, 2000, p. 20). "Since the rise of the modern university in the mid-nineteenth century there has been a conflict between the views of universities as communities of scholars and learners . . . and their definition as training grounds for narrowly defined skills" (Brown and Clignet, 2000, p. 30). In fact community colleges initially offered a largely liberal arts curriculum because of the lower status of vocational and technical programs. The institutional push toward vocational education was partly the product of the historical struggle to establish distinctions between secondary and post-secondary education, which enabled universities to require a high school diploma for entry (Collins, 1979). It also resulted from an expressed goal "to prepare less qualified and generally working-class and minority students with skills as techno-artisans or paraprofessionals" (Brown and Clignet, 2000, p. 21). Inside community colleges, however, "The irresistible force was the students, who greatly preferred the liberal arts, transfer-preparatory programs to the job-oriented terminal programs" (Collins, 1979, p. 127). Over time the curricular orientation changed with addition of adult, community, remedial, and occupational educational programs. The rise of vocational education occurred in the 1960s and 1970s; it now dominates the curriculum, enrolling 40% to 60% of community college students (Dougherty, 1994, p.191).

Changing Student Populations

Since the middle of the twentieth century the student population in the community college has been changing, bringing in not only middle-class white males newly

graduated from high school but also students of color, women, veterans, immigrants, and handicapped and older students. Ultimately community colleges have become "the most common point of entry into college for those groups that have traditionally been excluded from higher education" (Brint and Karabel, 1989, p. vi). By 1970 1.6 million middle-class, working-class, and immigrant students enrolled in community colleges, many hoping to transfer to higher-status four-year institutions (Brint and Karabel, 1989, p. 127). The new students at community colleges changed these institutions markedly from mainly serving the middle class to "predominantly lower middle-class and working-class institutions" (Brint and Karabel, 1989, p. 74).

> The social milieu of the late 1960s and the 1970s also contributed to the growth of the community college. Contributing to the climate were "racial unrest, student protests against the Vietnam War, public perception of a literacy crisis in American schools, and the increase of non-English-speaking immigrants in the U.S." (Nystrand and Duffy, 1997, p. 8). For instance, in New York pressure from minorities pushed ahead the city's plans for open admissions at the City University of New York (CUNY) from 1975 to 1970. "Minorities in the city had remained unassimilated into the mainstream, and they were aroused" (Shor, 1980, p. xv). With the early opening of CUNY and an increase of 20,000 students in the next three years more students, particularly African-Americans and Puerto Ricans, could now obtain draft deferments (ibid., p. 10), sharing in the white privilege of avoiding military service. Colleges, however, were not ready for the "nontraditional" students whose secondary schools had not prepared them well academically. Reflecting "the declining academic achievement of recent high school graduates and the growing number of disadvantaged students in the system" (Brint and Karabel, 1989, p. 129) the number of remedial courses increased.

## Freshman Composition and Remedial English

> Ironically, complaints about the college students' poor preparation for academic writing go back more than a century to elite colleges such as Brown and Harvard (Rose, 1985, p. 355). As a course of study "Freshman composition originated in 1874 as a Harvard response to the poor writing of upperclassmen, spread rapidly,

> and became the most consistently required course in the American curriculum" (Rose, 1985, p. 342). Thus from the early days of the American university the assumption had been that students learn to write in high school, not college. Bizzell notes that her
> freshman English students were supposed to be brushing up their ability to produce a certain kind of written product; they were not so much taught about this product as reminded of its characteristics by those marginal English department members not needed for rigorous scholarly tasks. (1982, p. 192)
>
> This expectation was confounded in the changing face of new students in the academy, with important curricular implications. "The development of open access to postsecondary educational opportunities resulted in the creation of special college programs to compensate for past academic deficiencies" (Sadovnik, 1994, p. 16). "In 1977-78 . . . 37 percent of English courses were offered at levels below general college grade" (Brint and Karabel, 1989, p. 129). The need for remedial, or basic, writing courses has not declined over time: The figure rose to 78% in 1998 (Arenson, 1998, Sect. 4, p. 4). The debate over whether institutions of higher learning should offer "remedial" courses has become increasingly heated (e.g., Aronson, 2000; Tinberg, 1999a, 1999b) as CUNY has moved to eliminate remedial education. Rose ascribes this struggle to the desire of colleges "to keep in place the hard fought for, if historically and conceptually problematic and highly fluid, distinction between college and secondary work" (1985, p. 349; see also, Collins, 1979).
> Academic writing thus became a terrain of both conquest and struggle for new

types of students, as it represents a form of cultural capital necessary for success in the university. Simultaneously with these social and educational developments, composition studies[2] as an academic field emerged. It contrasted with the literary tradition that had studied and taught exemplary texts, particularly the five-paragraph essay, and employed a prescriptive approach to grammar, punctuation, and surface-level features of writing in "a behaviorist approach to writing . . . [that was] atomistic, focusing on isolated bits of discourse, error centered, and linguistically reductive" (Rose, 1985, p. 343).

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[2] The distinction between writing and composition stands on the grounds that writing can be seen on a mechanical level that involves handwriting and copying, whereas composition includes the notions of invention, planning and other prewriting strategies, drafting, revising, and editing, and writing for a set purpose and to a specific audience or audiences.

Rather than look exclusively at the written product composition scholars questioned the nature of the writing process, applying perspectives from rhetoric, linguistics, sociolinguistics, semiotics, cognitive psychology, and critical theory to matters of composition (Nystrand, Greene, and Wiemelt, 1993). With the goal of teaching writing, not classical rhetorical forms, they began to develop a body of research that would elevate composition studies from an adjunct service department to a freestanding discipline. Composition studies also developed in response to the second-class status of fields such as writing and language learning, which are presumed to teach skills but not "content," and provide "service" to underprepared students. Rose writes "to discuss writing as a skill, then, is to place it in the realm of the technical, and in the current, research-ascendant American university, that is a kiss of death" (1985, p. 347).

Instructors as Gatekeepers

In part, composition instructors who taught forms of literary analysis and grammatical rules continued to fill a gatekeeping role in the academy: "Since the birth of the composition course in American education, the English teacher has been viewed as the custodian of 'refined' usage" (Shaughnessy, 1977, p. 120; see also, Rodby, 1992). But such instructors, who considered the students deficient in fundamental abilities, often failed to teach them academic literacy. "Even the most enlightened teachers locate difference and failure in the minds of individual learners" (Nystrand, Greene, and Wiemelt, 1993, p. 310) rather than in the social and material conditions and experiences that have labeled students with terms such as "basic," "deficient," "developmental," and "limited English proficient."

In response to the outcry by old-guard faculty and the public about the poor preparation of this new type of student, *Errors and Expectations,* Mina Shaughnessy's groundbreaking study of "basic" writers at CUNY proposed that the grammatical and syntactical mistakes that student writers made were systematic and novice, not illogical

or irreparable. Shaughnessy determined that basic writers needed to spend more time writing and to receive explicit instruction in the structures and conventions of academic writing. She argued that students' shortcomings reflected not an inability to think but a lack of initiation into the culture of the academy. She analyzed the influence of oral language in students' writing; their lack of vocabulary and the "allowable contexts" (1977, p. 76) of lexical use, which created excessive circumlocutions; and their ignorance of grammar, which created difficulties in using structures more common to writing than speech. She also recognized the strangeness and novelty of texts students encountered.

> The very situation out of which the language has grown is unfamiliar to the student. It is, first, a situation which requires him [*sic*] to communicate with an anonymous reader . . . , generally on an impersonal subject and in a formal register. It is, second, a politely polemical situation in which the reader is assumed to be, if not hostile to the writer's view, at least obliged to consider it carefully, according to criteria for evidence and sound reasoning that are themselves part of the legacy of academic language. (ibid., p. 187)

Shaughnessy's work contributed to the shift in focus from looking at the product to looking at the processes. The examination extended beyond the writer's mind into the composition classroom. Shaughnessy's colleague Kenneth Bruffee pioneered "collaborative learning and response groups in freshman composition at Brooklyn College [as] a direct response to the daily ferment of social and political change both on and off campus" (Nystrand and Duffy, 1997, p. 10). He aimed to replace conventional teaching methods, "radically altering, even inverting, the traditional teacher-student authority relationship" (ibid., p. 11), aiming for students' ownership of their work.

International Students in the United States

Meanwhile the population of international students at United States universities was also on the rise. Research about nonnative-English-speaking writers established the emerging field of second language composition. Kaplan's work with foreign student

writers at UCLA led to the realization that second-language proficiency and first-language writing ability were insufficient to produce good second language writing.

> Typically, in the United States [nonnative-English-speaking students] from other cultures operate with a somewhat different set of cultural assumptions; they are therefore likely to resort to coping skills that have worked in their native language and cultures but are inappropriate for the expectations of the U.S. academic audience (Reid, 1989, p. 221)

Even academically well-prepared international students manifest writing patterns confusing to English speakers. Kaplan's seminal article, "Cultural Thought Patterns in Inter-Cultural Education," attributing different rhetorical styles to different cultures, claiming that "logic per se is a cultural phenomenon" (1966, p. 2) that manifests itself in the rhetorical patterns of different cultures. He characterized Western-style writing as linear, relegating digression and indirectness to other cultural styles. Kaplan noted the value placed on clausal subordination in English writing: "in English, maturity of style is often gauged by degree of subordination rather than by coordination" (p. 8). This point accords with Shaughnessy's findings that the her students' simplistic texts relied mainly on coordinating conjunctions to make connections, thereby lacking the structural complexity that characterizes much academic writing.

Kaplan examined rhetorical conventions for the use of evidence, examples, explicit thesis statements and directness or indirectness. His article was criticized as reductionist and his methodology challenged because he only looked at students' writing in English and did not consider their level of writing competence in their native

languages. Nonetheless contrastive rhetoric began to explain why linguistic competence does not guarantee rhetorical competence. Later Kaplan linked rhetorical preferences to authorial purpose:

> All of the various rhetorical modes identified in the 'doodles article' are possible in any language. . . . The issue is that each language has certain clear preferences. . . . Any native speaker of any particular language has at his [*sic*] disposal literally hundreds of different mechanisms to signify the same meaning. (1987, p. 10)

To address issues of contrastive rhetoric Kaplan called for direct instruction: "The teacher must himself [sic] be aware of these differences and he must make these differences overtly apparent to his students" (1966, p. 14).

In the past 35 years English composition studies and second language composition have become intertwined in the process of exposing the practices and processes of academic discourse to scrutiny. Kaplan's theory of contrastive rhetoric converged with developments in the field of second language acquisition. Hymes (1966) developed the notion of communicative competence, which extended Chomsky's idea of linguistic competence into the social arena of speech communities. Communicative competence refers to a speaker's ability to use a language in particular contexts, in contrast to repeating memorized bits of dialog, for example. Krashen proposed the monitor model (1977), which distinguishes between learning and acquiring a language, and the input hypothesis (1985), which states that learners should be exposed to language slightly beyond their actual level of proficiency, but not too far to understand. Applying the monitor model to writing Krashen posits:

If second language acquisition and the development of writing ability occur in the same way, writing ability is not learned but is acquired via extensive reading in which the focus of the reader is on the message, i.e., reading for genuine interest and/or pleasure. (1984, p. 23)

Reading and writing are thus intertwined in the acquisition of academic discourse, and direct instruction in rules and conventions is probably insufficient.

The focus of communicative competence on meaning-making paralleled developments in composition studies, where process approaches also concentrated on developing meaning rather than fixating on formal stylistic considerations. In process writing student writers begin with making meaning, often about topics from their lived experiences, and delay considering the formal aspects of writing. The process begins with pre-writing activities such as freewriting, brainstorming, and idea clustering, which generate ideas before writing begins (Elbow 1973, 1981). Instead of working on isolated sentence-level grammatical or paragraph-developing exercises students learn to write by writing. Frequently students keep journals to practice writing and to develop ideas related to readings and other writing they are doing. Students draft papers multiple times using feedback from peers in small-group sessions and the instructor in individual conferences to create a recursive cycle of drafts and revisions. Ideally "the [writing] workshop . . . relies on authentic academic purposes and a real but nonauthoritarian teacher-reader whose readiness to take meanings seriously creates incentives to write" (Knoblauch and Brannon, 1984, p. 108). The expanded audience is meant to increase both the variety of responses to drafts and the writer's sense of audience; ideally, student writers no longer address the instructor alone (Widdowson, 1983, p. 44).

Process writing instructors are meant to delay responding to superficial grammatical errors in student writing until the final, or editing stage, of the process. Research in error correction indicates that students do not internalize or remember most of the surface-level corrections their instructors make (Zamel, 1985). Rodby points out that "work with paragraphs, sentences, grammar, and comprehension exercises in itself does not lead students to become engaged either in literacy or in the interactions mediated by literacy. Exercises do not accomplish literacy. Literacy accomplishes literacy" (1992, p. 101; see also, Rose, 1985). Harris explains "the consensus view of the profession," that

Students must learn not simply how to avoid mistakes but how to write in ways that engage the attentions of educated readers. Teachers need then to respond to what students are trying to say, to the effectiveness of their writing as a whole, and not simply to the presence or absence of local errors in spelling, syntax, or usage. Correctness thus

becomes not the single and defining issue in learning how to write but simply one aspect of developing a more general communicative competence. (1997, p. 83)

> Systematic grammatical errors indicate the development of an "interlanguage" in the process of writing (Kutz, 1986) analogous to the interlanguage that learners develop as they test their hypotheses about a new language by using language (see also, Bartholomae, 1980). Student writers learn to apply grammar and stylistic conventions as needed to clarify meaning (Courts, 1990, p. 120). A paper covered in red ink represents wasted effort on the part of the instructor and demoralizes the student.

For basic writers process writing has often meant writing about personal subjects, an approach that stemmed from learner-centered pedagogies based on the work of Freire (1973) and others, where the teaching begins with where students are, not with predetermined curricular material to be transmitted from teacher to student. For students with little writing experience or fears of writing, process writing is a logical place to begin. Yet Delpit (1995) has criticized the hegemony of process writing as a middle-class phenomenon that assumes that students will learn the formal conventions and mechanics of writing elsewhere; for students whose home backgrounds do not offer this instruction, their oppression continues. (See also, Heath, 1983.)

Basic writers in the university must ultimately develop the ability to write in academic contexts. If process writing does not lead to direct instruction in college-level composition using topics and genres of academic disciplines (Raimes, 1996), students will be handicapped. Although it is common in process writing approaches, very little academic writing asks for autobiography or personal experiences and reactions.[3]

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[3] In contrast to international students who may not be called upon to write English in modes other than academic, "the purposes are different for the many ESL immigrant and refugee nonnative speakers in

Research and theory in ESL composition have responded to critiques of process writing and personal topics, while retaining many of its useful aspects. In a survey of the field Raimes (1996) identifies four phases in the history of ESL composition that have contributed an understanding of the writing process. A focus on formal aspects of composition in the mid-1960s that was connected to Kaplan's contrastive rhetoric work shifted to a focus on the writer in the mid-1970s with process writing and Flower and Hayes's (1981) research on the individual cognitive processes of writing. In the mid-1980s the focus changed to the role of disciplinary content, particularly in the demands of academic courses, and a simultaneous consideration of the reader's role, explaining writing as a social as well as personal, cognitive act. "Writing cannot be separated from its context," explains Hairston, "audience and intention should affect every stage of the creative process" (1982, p. 84).

Students' Right to Their Own Cultures

Literature in the ESL field also discusses the dissonance felt by English language learners who enter the Anglophone academy and discover the impossibility of directly translating their thoughts and values into a new language (e.g., Hoffman, 1990; Lu, 1987; Rodriguez, 1982; Tucker, 1995). Lu proposes that "we need to call [students'] attention to voices that may seem irrelevant to the discourse we teach rather than encourage them to shut them out" (1987, p. 447). In learning academic writing students should not be forced to abandon their cultural backgrounds or the expression of this heritage. Freire and

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secondary and college classrooms" (Raimes, 1996, p. 15). Like native English speakers, this group uses

Macedo argue that "a critical mastery of a standard dialect can never be achieved without the development of one's own voice, which is contained within the social dialect that shapes one's reality (1987, p. 129). As Miller suggests, it becomes

> a problem for students [if they] are taught the modes of reasoning and expression that demarcate the educated culture without being taught that they are rhetorical conventions that were formalized to serve practical political purposes, including the exclusion of less educated people such as themselves. (1997, p. 285)

Rather than rejecting home discourses students must put them in perspective with what they are learning. Bizzell suggests that instructors "initiate students into academic discourse in such a way as to foster a productive critical distances on the social processes whereby knowledge is generated and controlled" (1982, p. 197). Shaughnessy noted this important tension:

> College both beckons and threatens [basic education students], offering to teach them useful ways of thinking and talking about the world, promising even to improve the quality of their lives, but threatening at the same time to take away from them their distinctive ways of interpreting the world, to assimilate them into the culture of academia without acknowledging their experience as outsiders. (1977, p. 292)

None of these authors argue for the maintenance of students' own modes of expression at the expense of acquiring academic discourse. Rather, they propose that instructors recognize the costs to students of adopting new rhetorical modes, including the assumption of new kinds of identities.

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writing in a range of situations.

Entering Discourse Communities

How do students become proficient at new discourses, perhaps acquiring new identities? Gee's concept of Discourses helps us to understand this process. First,

> Discourses are ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes and social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions and clothes. A Discourse is a sort of identity kit which comes complete with the appropriate costume and instructions on how to act, talk, and often write, so as to take on a particular social role that others will recognize. (1996, p. 127)

Because Discourses are life forms they cannot simply be described, but must be lived.

> Discourses are mastered through acquisition, not learning. That is, Discourses are not mastered by overt instruction . . . but by enculturation ("apprenticeship") into social practices through scaffolded and supported interaction with people who have already mastered the Discourse. (1992, p. 114)

Acquiring a new discourse means adding to one's repertoire of communicative strategies, modifying one's habitus in some ways. For students really to learn academic discourse they must, in addition to learning the rules and superficial features of the discourse, become apprentices in discourse communities (Swales, 1990), where they learn discipline-based epistemologies and writing conventions. Thus "standard English and the standard forms of academic discourse are a new style, a new dialect, in a sense, a new language" (Kutz, 1986, p. 388) for basic writers. Students must create successive approximate discourses before they can master a Discourse. To create these approximations usually requires a guide into the conventions of the discourse, such as an instructor.

The concept of discourse communities is complex and in some ways problematic. Rodby notes that generally, "discourse communities are conceived and discussed as static entities, not as groups which can change as others join their ranks" (1992, p. 85). Yet the goal for basic writers, and nontraditional students in general, is to cross the boundaries into these communities, perhaps changing the identity of the community in the process. In addition Pratt's notion of the "contact zone" (1991) calls into question the view of discourse communities that "assume[s] a unified and homogenous social world in which language exists as a shared patrimony" (1991, p. 38). She defines the contact zone as "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today" (1991, p. 34). These relations of power may be domestic or global, playing themselves out in the basic writing classroom in forms of resistance as well as accommodation (Fox, 1994). As this study demonstrates, "contact zone" more appropriately characterizes the experiences of the students in Basic Writing 3 than does "community."

Finally, "Discourse communities are organized around the production and legitimation of particular forms of knowledge and social practices at the expense of others, and they are not ideologically innocent" (Chase, 1988, p. 13). Unlike middle-class students, basic writers often lack familiarity and comfort with the academic genres, formal diction, stylistic conventions, and impersonal tone and subjects of academic writing. Bizzell notes "middle-class students are better suited by their socialization in language use to deal with academic discourse's relative formality and abstraction than working-class students are" (1982, p. 192). Likewise, nontraditional university students are often less familiar with staking their own claims for knowledge or inhabiting the pretense of expert knowledge than are their middle-class peers. They may be uncomfortable with adopting the stance of academic discourse, which "disguis[es] authorial fallibility and bias, as well as the uncertainty of discourse itself" (Spellmeyer, 1989, p. 264). Assuming this stance may require nontraditional students to suspend their disbelief about their status in the intellectual hierarchy, which may defy the messages they receive from faculty, other students, and the often-sterile physical environments of their institutions.

No unified definition of academic discourse exists; disciplines express themselves through different genres and writing conventions. For example, "disciplines differ in the degree to which they allow the writer to use the first person, the degree to which the passive is tolerated, and the degree to which interpretation or inference is permitted" (Purves, 1988, p. 13). Ignoring these differences does a disservice to students, who "will meet with less success in history or philosophy unless they are taught to recognize the conventions of each discipline" (Spellmeyer, 1989, p. 265).

The task for composition instructors is to acknowledge the fear and ambivalence of students while teaching aspects of academic discourse that will help students succeed

in the academy. One way for students to understand these processes is to take academic discourses as texts of study. Fox, for example, teaches that "communication style is relative and that how we talk or write is determined by what the audience expects or needs" (1994, p. 114). Rather than focus narrowly on disciplinary forms or formulaic documents such as the laboratory report, Spellmeyer (1989) believes instructors would do better to teach the "situatedness" of the student writer. Indeed,

> Even more important than remembering the forms and definitions of words is having the judgment to use them in appropriate ways, a judgment that comes not from the study of vocabulary lists but from having been a steady reader of the kind of writing people do in college. (Shaughnessy, 1977, p. 188)

The difficulty that many students face in acquiring this judgment and using it appropriately cannot be overstated. Basic writers meet a number of obstacles from the demands of work and family to societal forces such as racism and poverty.

## Basic Writers in the Academy

Scholarly and popular accounts of what Rose (1989) calls the "educational underclass" identify the academic and extracurricular obstacles that basic education students must surmount. Rose documented his experiences first as a "remedial" student and later as a teacher of veterans, ex-convicts, and UCLA students, some of whom had transferred from community colleges or had been admitted under special programs. He identified a range of factors that affected students' experiences at college, from mundane

concerns of child care and transportation, to issues of confidence and background schema, to knowledge of the conventions of academic discourse, to cultural differences. He emphasizes the high level of expectations for today's college students:

> Ours is the first society in history to expect so much of its people to be able to perform these very sophisticated literacy activities. . . . We forget, then, that by most historical—and current—standards, the vast majority of a research university's underprepared students would be considered completely literate. (1989, p. 188) .

In response, Rose supports the kind of explicit teaching proposed by Delpit and others. He also emphasizes that joining the academic community requires time, certainly more than one or two semesters in basic education courses. Sternglass's longitudinal study, *Time to Know Them* (1997), of native and nonnative speakers of English students at City College in New York points to the greater amounts of time nontraditional students need in college. For many students the financial need to work full-time made it difficult to be a student and to spend time on academic work. Reductions in financial aid contributed to the financial burden many students face of supporting themselves and their families. In some cases students also lacked family support; nor did many in Sternglass's study have role models who had succeeded in higher education. For these reasons nontraditional students often require more than the theoretical two years planned for completion of the community college programs, or four years for a bachelor's degree.

> Weis's (1985) study of African-American community colleges also demonstrated some of the cultural mismatches (Heath, 1993) and the effects of racism on student success. Issues of attendance, oppositional uses of time, and the value of

> the collective over the individual all played a role in students' experiences at the college. The ambivalence for blacks that attends adopting the dominant white culture was another significant factor for the students Weis studied. Given these multiple factors affecting students' experiences in negotiating home and school worlds, Fox defines "basic" writers as "negotiators of cultural conflicts" (1999, p. 69), and calls on instructors "despite their lack of institutional authority, [to] enter into the mire of institutional change, and transform those structures that work against access" (p. 70).

The Role of the Faculty

With their status linked to the content of their courses, faculty members have had little historical interest in teaching remedial courses. "For many [practitioners] at the university level, a focus on composition was the equivalent to a professional backwater (Nystrand and Duffy, 1997, p. 13). Status differentials for faculty exist as well between the teaching of "traditional" and "nontraditional" students, including English language learners. Because of both the status of their students and the issue of disciplinary content, composition and ESL instructors have lower status in the academy than faculty who teach disciplinary "content" areas. Increasingly ESL/composition instruction is provided by a cadre of part-time adjunct faculty rather than full-time, tenure-track professors. Although traditionally many adjunct faculty members held MAs and not PhDs, which depressed their status, an increasing number of PhDs find themselves on the part-time adjunct track. "Part-timers now make up over 40% of the faculty in institutions of higher education, and about two-thirds at two-year colleges. And their share of teaching jobs continues to grow, almost doubling since 1970" (Brill, 1999, p. 38). Many of these instructors work part-time for low pay and few or no benefits, and have little job security or institutional support.

Equally important these adjunct faculty members are often marginalized members of the academic communities in which they teach. Many of them shuttle between jobs where they teach one or two courses each at different colleges. They are excluded from curriculum development and often given little notice to prepare their courses. As a result part-time faculty may not share the institutional culture and values, or know current pedagogical theories.

Teachers need a conceptual-theoretical background in which to work, or else all of their pedagogy is ad hoc. Further, this background must be shared knowledge, i.e., teachers in a school or district need to know the rationale behind the "official" policy, but the policy itself is not a set of laws, merely a conceptual framework that gives coherence to what goes on within and among individual classrooms. . . . This framework should square with what we know about how language actually works, i.e., should take account of linguistic, psycholinguistic, learning, and rhetorical theory. (Winterrowd, 1983, p. 237)

In addition, writes Rose, "their courses are robbed of curricular continuity and of the status that comes with tenured faculty involvement" (1985, p. 342). Besides a lack of respect from peer faculty, the material repercussions of the subordinate positions of the mainly female English/ESL composition instructors manifest themselves in poor working conditions such as insufficient access to resources, shared or missing offices, and low job security. These conditions affect both classroom practice and the professional identities of these instructors. Brown and Clignet argue that

the demoralization of teaching results from its deprofessionalization as a calling.

. . . As a result, education is reduced to training or socialization, and educators are disheartened and alienated from students and from one another. They cannot readily offer appropriate role models within the bureaucratized hierarchy. Nor can they easily engage in intellectual exchange with their harried, specialized, and competitive peers. (2000, p. 38)

The working conditions and professional status of adjunct faculty have a large bearing on the findings of this study, affecting curriculum, instruction, and student retention.

## Summary

The basic writing class at the community college emerges from this discussion as a very particular situation: Marginalized faculty, often working part time, attempt to compensate for marginalized students' lack of previous preparation in the communications skills they need to enter and succeed in the academy. Faculty in other disciplines often carry unreasonable expectations about what these instructors and students can achieve in one or two semesters (Zamel, 1995). Indeed even under the best of circumstances the task of making students comfortable with writing, teaching the writing process, grammar and stylistic conventions, academic discourse in general and disciplinary genres in specific is probably impossible.

Students themselves may not be prepared for the quantity of work they need to do and the amount of time necessary to become proficient in academic discourses, or what

the personal and emotional costs may be (Sternglass, 1997). When English language learners enter the basic writing classroom they add other issues to these challenges, although many of the issues of cultural loss and adaptation are similar to those faced by other nontraditional students. The heterogeneity of English language learners in the writing classroom further complicates these issues. Finally, to meet one of the most difficult and complex challenges in postsecondary education, community (and other) colleges allocate increasingly fewer resources to basic education.

# CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research methods I used to study the community college ESL writing class. As the semester unfolded and my initial research question about argumentation became increasingly unrelated to what I observed, my goal became to understand and explain what was actually going on in BW3. Chapter 2 reviewed the current state of research in first- and second-language composition theory. One major lens of analysis in this study was therefore to compare the enacted curriculum of BW3 to the theoretical ideal. A second lens used critical curriculum theory to analyze this semester of BW3 and its effects on the instructor and students. Critical curriculum theory looks at the relations of power and economics that underlie the educational apparatus. Although much research based on critical curriculum theory has a macro-level scope, such theory is equally applicable to fine-grained descriptive and analytical studies. Indeed such studies provide detailed support for larger, more general theories.

> This chapter discusses the selection of the research site and participants, the choice of research methods, and the analysis of data. The general approach to this study can be classified as qualitative, which Denzin and Lincoln define in this way:
> Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (1994, p. 2)
>
> The qualitative approach combines a number of data-gathering techniques including observations, interviews, document collection, and questionnaires. Within qualitative research ethnographic methods are particularly useful for providing a thick description (Geertz, 1973) of the research site. Such description enables an analysis of the actors and events that constitute the site, one that emerges as much from the participants' perspectives as that of the researcher. In

> fact "the essential core of ethnography is this concern with the meaning of actions and events to the people we seek to understand" (Spradley, 1979, p. 5). This method does not expect the researcher to approach educational research without motivations. Indeed my concern with the provision of quality education to immigrant college students prompted my research. My experiences as a college ESL/composition instructor as well as my beliefs, values, and ideologies about immigrant education interact with the findings of my research and the perspectives of the participants.

Selection of the Research Site

This interest in immigrant college students led me to conduct this study in a local community college, Monroe Technical College (MTC). My initial research question about the acquisition of Western-style argumentation prompted a desire to compare the experiences of community college ESL students with those of the international ESL students at the local university. A colleague in the university's ESL program put me in contact with her husband, Richard Dresser, a full-time ESL instructor at MTC. He introduced me to Maureen Powell, the lead teacher of the Alternative Learning Division, which houses the ESL program. In the fall of 1998 I observed a number of classes in a BW3 course that Powell taught. I selected BW3 because it is the highest-level writing course in MTC's basic education program that students can take before enrolling in for-credit composition courses in the Arts and Science Division. Thus it seemed most likely that its curriculum would include argumentation and would be most comparable to university-level courses (though this turned out not to be the case).

Powell put me in touch with the instructor hired to teach BW3 in the next semester, spring 1999. This instructor agreed to allow me to observe her class, but by the time the semester began she had decided not to teach it. Nonetheless, Powell allowed me

to begin my observations at MTC in January 1999, as she was teaching the course until a new instructor could be hired. I had planned to conduct similar observations at the university in the following summer session. But soon after beginning my observations, I saw few points of comparison between the courses in the two programs. I thus dropped the comparative aspect of the proposed study to concentrate on the community college.

Selection of Participants

I received informal permission from MTC to conduct my research, contingent on student and instructor consent.[4] Within the course I wanted to focus on immigrant students who planned to enter some sort of college program. On my first day Powell granted time to explain my research to the students and to pass out the consent form (Appendix A). Ultimately all the students and the instructor and administrators signed informed consent forms approved by my university (Appendix A). Some students signed the form immediately upon receiving it; others returned it in subsequent classes.

To gain detailed information about the students, early in the semester I administered a student questionnaire (Appendix B). If students were not present when I first distributed the questionnaire I gave it to them later with the consent form and asked them to return both. Among the questions, those relevant to identifying suitable subjects for in-depth study included demographic questions and items asking about students' highest educational attainment levels, educational and career objectives, and whether they would agree to be interviewed later.

[4] Although Powell informed me that MTC's research director wanted to meet with me to establish protocols for researchers at MTC, this meeting never occurred.

The information from the questionnaires immediately complicated my preconceptions about the types of students enrolled in the course. About a third of the students were related to students or staff at the university and therefore did not meet my idea of "immigrant." As Chapter 1 discussed, the concept of immigrant becomes elastic as we realize that few clear-cut distinctions exist among the categories of "refugees," "immigrants," and "international students," sometimes also called "sojourners." Nonetheless, I excluded most of the students in the category of relatives of international students or staff. Chapter 4 describes more fully the students who participated completely in the study. Here I identify them chiefly by their demographic characteristics:

- Minji Park, a 35-year-old Korean woman married to a research sociologist at the university. The mother of two girls, Minji had a bachelor's degree and planned to become a music teacher. Although Minji and her family had started as an international student family, they now planned to remain in the United States.
- Rana Hasan and Leila Hasan, Palestinian sisters raised in the United Arab Emirates, were 18 and 19 years old, respectively. With their 21-year-old brother, Ali, the Hasans planned to enter a four-year university. I speak of the sisters together, as I interviewed them jointly.
- Katarina Stevenson, a 26-year-old Russian woman married to an American accountant, held a bachelor's degree in shipbuilding engineering. She had a six-year-old son and planned to become a tax preparer.

- Saky Chang was a 24-year-old Laotian man with a diploma from a Monroe high school. The father of a four-year-old boy, Saky worked in a plastics manufacturing company and wanted to become a police officer.
- Ahmad Jodo, 32, a refugee from Sierra Leone, worked in a bakery and for a taxicab company. Although he had completed high school in Sierra Leone, he needed to pass the GED tests. He hoped to become a lawyer after earning a bachelor's degree.

These participants were selected to provide as wide a range of demographic characteristics as possible while meeting the criteria that they be immigrants interested in pursuing higher education. In addition, these participants were chosen for mid-semester interviews because half of them left the course relatively early, while the others stayed through most or all of the semester. I also wanted to limit the number of participants in the study. For these reasons I did not interview, for example, the three retired Russians in the course, who met the criteria of being immigrants but not that of pursuing higher education beyond adult education courses. Likewise I did not interview the other international student spouses, although they planned to pursue higher education, because they were not immigrants.

In addition to students, I sought out key informants in the institution. Plainly the course instructor, George Cleary, was a crucial agent in the classroom. I also secured the involvement of Maureen Powell, a pivotal figure in the ESL program and the ALD. Finally, it seemed equally important to interview the dean of the ALD, Ricardo Garcia, to

obtain his views on what the ALD was trying to do. Chapter 4 provides short biographies of these participants. I also gained background information from ESL instructor Richard Dresser as well as the president of the MTC part-time instructors' union and the resettlement coordinator at Jewish Social Services in Monroe.

## Collection of Data

Spradley notes, "In doing field work, ethnographers make cultural inferences from three sources: (1) from what people say; (2) from the way people act; and (3) from the artifacts people use" (1979, p. 8). These sources correspond to my focus on participants' discourse in the classroom and interviews, their actions, primarily in the classroom, and the textual curricular materials they used.

### *Ethnographic Observations.*

The class met twice a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays, for two hours each time, over a 15-week semester. In general, Tuesdays were spent in the computer laboratory, Thursdays in the classroom. Except for the first week of the semester, I was present for nearly every class that met in the classroom. When I observed in the classroom I took field notes to support the audiotapes I made (Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw, 1985). I did not audiotape the classes held in the computer laboratory but made field notes when I observed there. After about six weeks of observing classes in the computer laboratory, I stopped attending regularly because very little of note was happening. I returned periodically to check in on the computer laboratory classes.

I decided against videotaping for two reasons. First, I wanted to remain as unobtrusive as possible in the course, and audiotapes seemed less likely than videotapes

to influence or inhibit participants in the class. Second, as transcribing from videotape alone is often insufficient to obtain quality data, the task of both audiotaping and videotaping was daunting for an individual researcher.

My observations can in many ways be classified as "participant observation" (Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994), although my participation ended up being less than I had originally hoped. My plans to meet with selected students to discuss their paper revisions, for example, never came to fruition as students were not required to revise papers. As little collaborative group work occurred, I also did not have the opportunity to participate in students' groups. Nor did the instructor involve me in specific ways in the course. In general, I tried to prevent my presence from impinging on the classroom events (Carspecken, 1996). Some students came to see me as an ally and a source of information, particularly about the university and ways to achieve their educational goals. Occasionally they asked me questions related to the course content or shared my copy of the textbook in class. In those cases I acted as an instructor to the students sharing my book. The students' comfort with my presence may be demonstrated by their request to take my photograph at the end of the semester. My identity as a white, female, middle-class university student with experience teaching English language and composition also influenced students' reactions to me. My gender probably enabled my interactions with Leila and Rana Hasan, for example, in ways that may not have been available to a male researcher. Students who understood both that I was a student and that I taught ESL at the university seemed to see these attributes as sympathetic to their situations.

*Student Questionnaires.*

The instructor gave me time during class on February 2, 1999, to administer a one-page questionnaire to the BW3 students (Appendix B). An initial use of the questionnaire was to identify students who might be eligible and interested in participating in interviews. The questionnaire began with contact and demographic information, including current occupation, if any, and highest educational level attained. Among the demographic questions I neglected to ask about the race, religion, and parental status of students, which would have been helpful in understanding the student population early on. However, this information emerged from classroom observations and interviews. The class presented an interesting mixture of Jews, Muslims, Christians, and followers of Asian religions including Buddhism and Shinto. Informants' parental status and race also played roles in their experiences as students in BW3. The questionnaire also sought to learn about the students' future academic and professional goals. The demographic data are summarized in Chapter 4.

*Interviews.*

It is important to view interviewing as a particular type of speech event, not a naturally occurring form of communication. Briggs explains, "The interview moves the role that each [participant] normally occupies in life into the background and structures the encounter with respect to the roles of interviewer and interviewee. Attention is concentrated on the topics introduced by the researcher's questions" (1986, pp. 2-3). The speech event of the interview highlights the power relations between participants. The role of asking questions can shift some of the power from the participant, for example, the dean, to the interviewer. Thus "the social situation created by the interview does not simply constitute an obstacle to the respondent's articulation of his or her own beliefs. Like speech events in general, it shapes the form and content of what is said" (1986, p. 22). Interviewing is a cultural form that, in the case of the BW3 students, may have been more or less familiar. Indeed, in doing research with immigrants it is important to keep in mind the high stakes that such interviews can hold; for example with undocumented immigrants. To my knowledge, none of the

BW3 students were in this position; nonetheless, interviews can be fraught with such questions of power.

For this study I designed schedules for ethnographic interviews (Spradley, 1979), with questions grounded in the events I observed in the classroom as well as my own concerns. I conducted interviews with six students (three who left the course—Saky, Ahmad, and Katarina—and three who stayed—Minji, Leila, and Rana) in the spring and summer of 1999. These interviews attempted to explore students' experiences in the course and their understandings of what kinds of preparation in composition they might need for their future goals. Interviews were semi-structured and open-ended (Appendix D), based on ideas that emerged from the field notes, observations, and classroom transcripts. They usually lasted from 25 to 50 minutes. I audiotaped the interviews and simultaneously took detailed notes. The first set of interviews took place by appointment at quiet public spaces at MTC, on the university campus, and in a café.

In general students readily agreed to be interviewed. Although the Hasan sisters agreed at first, they later cancelled their first interview. When I then checked with their older brother, the sisters agreed to reschedule the interview. I had planned to interview only Leila, the older sister, but the Hasan sisters seemed to assume that both of them would participate, which was acceptable.

In the spring and summer of 2000 I re-interviewed these students. These second interviews were intended to ascertain what effect, if any, BW3 had had on the students. The interviews occurred in a university music practice room, a restaurant, a public library, and at one student's home. The second interview with the Hasan sisters occurred over the telephone, as they had moved to another city. This brief interview took place after some difficulties establishing an interview time. I telephoned them to follow up on unanswered electronic mail messages, and learned that the Hasans were about to leave for Jerusalem for the summer. Thus I was not able to audiotape the interview.

I also conducted semi-structured, open-ended interviews with the instructor, George Cleary, in February and June 1999. The February interview occurred in the classroom while the students were taking a diagnostic writing examination in another room and therefore did not require a separate appointment. The second interview took

place at my apartment, but only after Cleary missed our first scheduled appointment the week after the semester ended. I interviewed Maureen Powell in May 1999 in a conference room in the ALD. Although the first side of the audiotape did not record, my notes captured the content of her discourse. The second side of the audiotape did record; the content of my notes matched the transcript very closely, giving me confidence about the reliability of my notes for side one. Unfortunately her words on the first side were lost, restricting my analysis of her discourse. Finally, I interviewed the dean, Ricardo Garcia, in October 1999, in his office. He had cancelled the first two appointments we made, but kept the third one. These interviews lasted an hour or less.

Interviewing was a recursive process to the extent possible. I transcribed the interviews as soon as I completed them and began analysis. This process determined the nature and sequence of the questions I asked in subsequent interviews. The second interview with Cleary and the administrators' interviews were conducted after the semester ended, thus I was able to ask them retrospective questions. By the time of the dean's interview I had completed the first round of interviews and transcribed and analyzed most of the classroom and interview audiotapes.

*Document Gathering.*

Supplemental data collected consisted of course handouts and documents, student papers, program and institutional documents, and the textbook, *The Writer's Express* (McWhorter, 1997). Course handouts included the syllabus and instructional documents. Institutional documents included the course objectives, mission and policy statements, the college catalog, pages from the college website, and program pamphlets. I also received a

report of the Transition Committee of the ALD, whose goal is to help students move from basic education into MTC's academic or vocational programs.

My original plan included meeting with students to examine successive drafts of their writing for the course, and to offer them assistance if needed. But the drafts expected in process writing methodology were not required in BW3. As I had put my hopes in the research paper to provide an assignment that required successive drafts I did not gather students' papers early in the semester. In the end, to get a sense of students' writing despite its lack of argumentation, near the close of the semester I photocopied the student papers that Cleary still had. As a result I have a random selection of student papers from various points in the semester, some from students who dropped the course, some uncorrected, and some whose authors had applied Cleary's corrections to earlier versions. Still, I was not able to achieve the understanding of students' composing processes—or development of argument—that I originally sought because successive drafts of their papers were not required (except for superficial corrections).

Methodological Problematics

It is important to reflect on the power relations inherent in the researcher's role, in this case, on my role as an outsider coming from the local university into the community college. In both local and larger contexts four-year research universities enjoy greater power and prestige than do community colleges. Within the community college the ALD itself holds subordinate status to the divisions that grant credit and credentials. In important ways these conditions shape the research conditions, in particular, the

discourse of the interviews, how each informant enters into dialog with the interviewer, and the extent to which their discourses animate the institution, themselves, or other interlocutors.

The concept of informed consent is also problematic in this case. That my presence in Cleary's classroom had been established prior to his arrival put him at a disadvantage. Although theoretically he could have refused to allow me to do research in his classroom, my established presence as well as his desire not to make waves militated against asking me to leave. He readily agreed to our first interview in February 1999. The problems with meeting for the second interview may have indicated his growing discomfort. By the same token, the administrators' role as public employees made it unlikely that they would completely refuse to talk to me. Yet the dean cancelled two interviews before keeping the third. Both he and Powell ignored follow-up requests that I sent by electronic mail for documents and information.

As for the students, they seemed unclear on why I was in their classroom and asking them questions about it. In his first interview Saky asked, "Is Mr. Cleary going to get trouble or something?" He was also reluctant to name another ESL teacher whose class he had been in: "I got one class the teacher is, she doesn't, she like don't teach anything. . . . Every day she just talk, talk, all that stuff and you know about movie[s], about whatever" (INT, 7/7/99). An exception was Minji Park, who seemed to understand the role of the researcher, perhaps because her husband had recently completed his Ph.D. in sociology.

My presence also affected the class in some ways. I do not judge that it had much effect on the students' participation. For the teacher, however, my simply observing the pedagogy under the working conditions of the ALD may have made my presence appear as a form of surveillance or critique. Cicourel notes similar issues in his study of language and pedagogy: "The day-to-day workings of the classroom could be construed as damaging to the teacher and administration" (1974, p. 8). Indeed,

> The teachers must put up with the observations of the researchers and this can bother many who are unsure of themselves or feel that they have a particularly "difficult" class. The administrators and teachers also fear that the results of the study might damage their reputation or bring about some kind of reprisals from other administrators or parental groups in the community. (Cicourel, 1974, p. 9)

Cleary's awareness of his increasingly vulnerable situation as the semester unfolded and as students left the class emerged in his second interview.

Finally, I had and have little accountability to the participants. As Spradley notes, "cultural descriptions can be used to oppress people or to set them free" (1979, p. 13). My goal in this dissertation is to describe what turned out to be a very problematic situation with the hope of instigating improvement (in general, if not in this specific setting) rather than castigating those involved. To that extent I consider myself a criticalist,

> a researcher or theorist who attempts to use his or her work as a form of social or cultural criticism and who accepts certain basic assumptions: that all thought is

fundamentally mediated by power relations that are social and historically constituted; that facts can never be isolated from the domain of values or removed from some form of ideological inscription; that the relationship between concept and object and between signifier and signified is never stable or fixed and is often mediated by the social relations of capitalist production and consumption; that language is central to the formation of subjectivity (conscious and unconscious awareness); that certain groups in society are privileged over others . . . . (Kincheloe and McLaren, 1994, pp. 139-140)

I attempt here to describe and analyze the events that I witnessed and the participants' understandings of them without assigning blame. Nonetheless, the portrait that emerges of the administrators, and of the instructor and his methods, is not flattering. My description of the institutional conditions is intended to explain some of the reasons for what I observed. Yet because of the critical nature of my findings I have not recruited the participants to evaluate, comment upon, or modify my interpretations of the data. Such a practice would cause distress to the administrators, and particularly to the instructor, with little to be gained. The research was not designed to be collaborative. I alone hold responsibility for the conclusions I draw.

This information about data-gathering helps establish the conditions under which the research was conducted. The qualitative research methods combined to provide a thick description of BW3 in the spring of 1999. The classroom observations and audiotapes also provided points of departure for the interviews and allowed me to compare the informants' discourse with my observations. As Adler and Adler note,

"observation produces especially great rigor when combined with other methods. . . . researchers' observations of their settings and their subjects can be considered hard evidence. These are especially valuable as an alternate source of data for enhancing cross-checking" (1994, p. 382). Finally, the formal documents I gathered enabled me to analyze the public rhetoric of the institution, especially about the pedagogic goals of the division. Student- and instructor-produced written texts afforded a view of aspects of the enacted curriculum of the course.

## Data Analysis

### *Transcription.*

Duranti points out that "transcription is a selective process, aimed at highlighting certain aspects of the interaction for specific research goals" (1997, p. 161). I transcribed verbatim all of the interviews I conducted, including pauses, emphasis, overlap between speakers, latching, lengthened vowels, false starts, self-repairs, and incomplete words (Goodwin, 1990). As I was not intending to engage in close conversation analysis I did not time the pauses in speech, nor did I detail volume, intonation, and gestures in the transcripts (Duranti, 1997, Ch. 5). In addition to the interviews, I completely transcribed the audiotapes of the first four classes that I observed (January 19 to 28, 1999). I subsequently transcribed selected salient moments from the remaining audiotapes of classes from February 2 to May 6, 1999, that helped to establish the pedagogic patterns in the classroom. In quoting from the transcripts in this dissertation I have preserved the errors that students (and others) made, but in some cases I have bracketed corrections into standard English for greater comprehension. I use these abbreviations to indicate the data

source: INT for interviews; TR for classroom transcripts; FN for field notes. Document sources are indicated in the text or in parentheses.

*Conceptual Analysis.*

Despite the limited scope of this study I gathered a large amount of discursive and textual evidence. Analysis as well as data collection is a recursive process. As the events of the semester in BW3 unfolded, not only did my research questions evolve, so did my growing understanding of the theories that could be used to explain what I observed. Chapter 2 discussed the critical curriculum theories from which I built the conceptual analytic frameworks that enabled me to understand the data, primarily ways to examine the power relations that developed in the course and the ALD. I combined these theories with discourse analysis.

*Discourse Analysis.*

As the semester unfolded the relationships among classroom events, the ALD, and MTC became increasingly clear. Discourse analysis helped me understand the complexities of these multilevel interactions. Fairclough proposes that the "analysis of discourse practices should . . . involve a combination of what one might call 'micro-analysis' and 'macro-analysis' (1992, p. 85). Discourse analysis enabled me to compare the observed events of the classroom with participants' understandings of them and with the institutional rhetoric disseminated in interviews and in public and pedagogic documents.

As the term 'discourse analysis' covers a large amount of ground I here discuss the parts of the field of discourse studies that I found most helpful. Discourse analysis is a relatively new (since the 1960s) form of inquiry that treats as its subject actual textual entities rather than isolated utterances or artificial linguistic examples fabricated to illustrate a point or concept. Van Dijk defines discourse as "a communicative event. That is, people use language in order to communicate ideas or beliefs (or to express emotion), and they do so as part of more complex social events (1997, p. 2). He identifies three broad, interrelated strands within the field of discourse analysis: "(a) those which focus on discourse 'itself', that is on structures of text or talk; (b) those which study discourse and communication as cognition; and (c) those which focus on social structure and culture" (1997, p. 24). I draw more on the first and third of this series than on the second. Both spoken and written modes of communication can be understood with discourse analytical

methods. "They are both after order, rules, regularities in the detailed analysis of structures and strategies of text and talk" (Van Dijk, 1997, p. 23).

Of the forms of discourse analysis, sociocultural analysis provides the most useful framework for this study. Gee (1999a) constructs this framework with these elements: situated meanings, social languages, cultural models, and Discourses. Situated meanings are customized to specific contexts. For example, a "time out" in an elementary school carries a radically different meaning than a "time out" on a football field. Social languages are distinctive varieties of language used to create socially situated identities and activities. Classroom discourse, for instance, generally displays other characteristics than does a conversation at a family dinner. Cultural models are images, metaphors, schemas, or storylines that partly exist in an individual's head and are partly represented in social and cultural mediating devices; they define what counts, for a given social or cultural group, as "normal" and "natural." Carspecken elaborates: "There is no such thing as a pure representation of subjective experience: schema must always be used, and such schema will be closely tied to contexts of social action. At the very least, a person discussing highly subjective and almost ineffable experiences will have to employ metaphors rooted in cultural forms of life" (1996, p. 39). Finally, Discourses (with a big 'D') identify systems in which people, language uses, symbols, tools, and technologies are integrated and coordinated both to pursue common goals and to produce and recognize distinctive socially situated identities. Discourses can recruit from situated meanings, social languages, and cultural models.

In contrast to traditional linguistic inquiry, and indeed, much of conversation analysis (Atkinson and Heritage, 1984; Sacks, 1992), sociocultural discourse analysis relies on knowledge of the context(s) in which discourse is produced in order to formulate an understanding of the meanings of the discourse. Van Dijk defines context as "the structure of all properties of the social situation that are relevant for the production or the reception of discourse. Context features not only influence discourse, but also vice versa: discourse may typically also define or change such context characteristics" (1997, p. 19). More specifically, to Gee, "the context of an utterance (oral or written) is everything in the material, mental, personal, interactional, social, institutional, cultural, and historical situation in which the utterance was made that could conceivably influence" (1999a, p. 54) an interpretation of its meaning. Thus context includes such attributes of participants as race, gender, class, and religion, the setting for discourse production, and the power relations in the setting. For linguistic analysis context is crucial not only for providing information about the environment in which discourse occurs but also for identifying marked usages that diverge from basic patterns in the language (see Kaplan, 1983, p. 148).

Related to sociocultural discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992) is a form of social discourse analysis that overtly works for social change. Van Dijk summarizes, "Critical scholars of discourse do not merely observe such

> linkages [as racist discourse with racism] between discourse and social structures, but aim to be *agents of change,* and do so in solidarity with those who need such change most" (1997, p. 23, emphasis original). One focus of critical discourse analysis, therefore, is the expression and construction of ideology in discourse. Fairclough explains: "Discourse is shaped by relations of power and ideologies, and the constructive effects discourse has upon social identities, social relations, and systems of knowledge and belief, neither of which is normally apparent to discourse participants" (1992, p. 12). Discourses are structured both by the formal settings in which they are created, such as classrooms, and in interactional relationships, as with interviews. People modify their speech according to the situation and their interlocutors. They are not simply acted upon by their circumstances, but also assert agency. Fairclough "sees social subjects as shaped by discursive practices, yet also capable of reshaping and restructuring those practices" (1992, p. 45). His "social theory of discourse" states that "discourse is a mode of action . . . a mode of representation . . . a form of social practice . . . [and] a dialectical relationship between discourse and social structure" (1992, pp. 63-64, passim). These elements of Fairclough's theory play a role in the levels of analysis that this dissertation undertakes.

The Generalizability of This Study

I present the results of one semester of research in one course at one community college. I do not make claims to address other classrooms, other agents, or other institutions. Some of the findings bear specifically upon the variety of students in the class. Because of its location in Monroe, which also has an internationally acclaimed university, MTC attracts a broader range of students than community colleges in other locations might. I do not have data comparing the distribution of students in this class with similar classes at other community colleges, or, for that matter, even within MTC itself. Likewise, while my experience as a college instructor provides a framework for my discussions about institutional structures and relationships, I lack additional data to make broader generalizations about whether my findings relate to structures and relationships at other community colleges.

# CHAPTER 4: THE BASIC WRITING 3 COURSE

This chapter provides a thick description of the research site, participants, and events of the semester under study in spring 1999. As Bourdieu notes, "The deepest logic of the social world can be grasped only if one plunges into the particularity of an empirical reality" (1998, p. 2). The research site, Monroe Technical College (MTC), is located in a medium-sized midwestern city. Also located in the city is a large research university that attracts the fifth-highest number of international students among U.S. institutions of higher education. Founded in 1912 as part of the first state-supported system for vocational, technical, and higher education, "to teach vocational skills, the school changed its name five times as its mandate has expanded to include associate degrees, college transfer courses, and adult basic education" (MTC, 1999-2000, p. 6). Monroe Technical College is the second largest campus of a statewide network, the Technical College System. In 1997-98, MTC served 50,053 students ([State] Legislative Reference Bureau, 1999). MTC sits in one of 16 vocational/technical districts and serves 12 counties. Monroe Technical College comprises the Agriscience, Apprenticeship, Technical and Industrial Division; the Business and Applied Arts Division; the Arts and Sciences Division; the Health, Human, and Protective Services Division; and the Alternative Learning Division. The last houses the English as a Second Language (ESL) and Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs and offers services through the Learning Center that include GED completion and special needs student services.

As the college's mandate has evolved, the prominence of adult basic education has grown, reflecting an increase in federal funding for Adult Basic Education since the 1960s. A common rationale for such educational funding comes from a historian of the state's vocational and technical programs: "The Adult Basic Education program is a second chance for many [state] adults to acquire the basic education skills necessary for 'occupational training and more profitable employment.' It is also a chance to increase personal confidence and self-respect" (Paris, 1985, p. 172). A district board decides the college's budget; this arrangement "is unique in that [the board] stands alone. It is not subsumed under any other education board" (Paris, 1985, p. 1).

In Monroe, the technical college has two main campuses, Airport and Downtown. In the mid-1980s the college moved to the new Airport Campus, leaving the Alternative Learning Division behind in the former high school that had housed all of the college. MTC also has satellite campuses: "It operates ten college facilities spread among five campuses and offers instruction in hundreds of locations throughout the district" (MTC, 1999-2000, p. 6). In general, the academic programs are located at the Airport Campus; noncredit adult education courses are offered at the Downtown Campus, with a few offered at the Airport Campus.

## Monroe Technical College's Mission

In the words of its mission statement, MTC "provides accessible, high quality learning experiences that serve the community." The community college

> welcomes all individuals who can benefit from the services provided. In being accessible, the college:

*complies with all applicable federal and state laws.
*supports students to choose and prepare for successful careers by assessing students' skills and needs.
*delivers education at varied locations and times and at reasonable costs.

. . . The college:
*offers intellectually rigorous studies facilitated by highly skilled faculty in technical and vocational skills, basic literacy and arts and sciences.
*designs educational activities using up-to-date research in education, business trends and student learning outcomes.

## The ESL Program

According to the brochure that describes the English as a Second Language program, classes are "open to adults who are American citizens, permanent residents, or refugees." Thus those with student visas (F-1 and J-1) are not supposed to be eligible to attend MTC. The vast majority of students who attend the local university arrive on F-1 visas, which are for academic rather than vocational study, for which the Immigration and Naturalization Service issues an M-1 visa (Immigration and Naturalization Service, 2000).[5] Despite the prohibition against students on visas A through J attending MTC exceptions can be made, and at least one occurred in the course under study.

The ESL program brochure states that the goal of the classes

> is to enable adults to communicate in English in day-to-day life and work situations. To help achieve this goal, students who can speak and understand spoken English adequately are assigned to Lab and other basic skills classes along with native speakers of English.

There are five levels of ESL, the highest called "English as a second language transition," at the "high intermediate/low advanced" level. According to Dean Ricardo Garcia of the ALD, this relatively new five-tier structure was implemented in technical colleges

[5] Some students, such as au pairs, on J-1 visas can attend school as well as work in specific jobs.

statewide to provide a greater bridge for students from lower to higher levels (INT 10/22/99). The brochure specifies that, "students may enroll for as many as 12 hours of class per week. This allows for one section of each of the three skills [conversation, writing, and reading/vocabulary] or as a combination of ESL classes or labs."

In the ESL program, the stated focus is primarily on survival skills and topics such as "Personal identification; money; shopping (for clothes & food); time; transportation; housing; directions; telephone; banking; health; community service; employment: finding a job, on the job; clarification; social language; grammatical structure; listening/ comprehension." But Garcia noted an increasing shift in the college's ESL programs to include off-site workplaces, where they teach "English to get the work done"(INT 10/22/99). MTC's ESL program is thus mainly geared toward nonacademic language skills that enable students to function in the daily or work world.

Nonetheless, when students reach the upper levels of the program, they can take courses that are not specifically designated as ESL courses: Basic Writing, Basic Oral Communication, Basic Reading, Basic Math, Basic Algebra, Basic Science, and Introduction to College Reading. For this reason two native English speakers briefly attended BW3. According to the "Course Outcome Summary" developed by ALD lead teacher Maureen Powell, "this [BW3] course is for adults who have writing skills at a high school level and who want to improve their writing skills for further education, employment, or life." The Course Outcome Summary continues to describe the goals of the course:

> To help students prepare for or succeed in communications classes in the freshman year of college. 2. To help students prepare to pass the GED/HSED writing skills test. 3. To help students improve their writing for getting a job and succeeding on the job. 4. To help students develop a confidence in their writing ability that will encourage them to fully participate in a literate society.

According to lead teacher Powell, the ESL program has been funded with federal monies through the Adult Basic Education Act of 1966, which, with subsequent amendments and reformulations, became the Adult Basic Education and Family Literacy Act (INT 5/18/99). "Funding for Adult Basic Education is a joint arrangement with federal monies provided by the Adult Education Act, state dollars made available through the [state] Board of Vocational, Technical and Adult Education, and local funding provided by the VTAE [vocational, technical and adult education] districts" (Paris, 1985, p. 172). According to Powell such funding allows the classes to be offered free of charge. However, students who take summer courses are charged $3.50 per credit for supplies since summer courses receive only state funding, which covers only the cost of the instructor's salary.

The ESL program started in the 1960s and early 1970s with students including Southeast Asian refugees, Tibetans, Cubans, and Russian Jews. As Chapter 1 noted, global crises have a direct affect on the student population. For example, during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Mariel Boat Lift, groups of Afghanis and Cubans arrived at MTC. At present, Mexicans make up the largest number of students in the ESL program. Other nationalities represented are Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and the Dominican Republic. The division recently received federal funds to teach Kosovar refugees, as nearly 100 of them arrived in the county after the war (Wegner and Saemann, 1999).

Structured English classes have been offered at MTC since the early 1970s. Increasingly ESL is a major part of adult basic education; as the population changes, there is currently a greater need for ESL classes than for other parts of the ABE program. Administrators estimate that ESL makes up 40 to 50% of the program (INT 10/22/99).

According to Powell the ESL program creates "feeders," students who go into other programs. Ideally, noted Dean Garcia, each student would have a Personal Education Plan, established in conjunction with a teacher to "set up the plan of where you want to go, . . . how you're gonna get there, . . . set up some times to review where you're at and what you need to do, next steps, to get where you want to go. So you'd identify short-term goals and long-term goals and points to review where you're at, and a plan of action" (INT 10/22/99). Some students go from the ALD into Associate of Arts degree programs or one-year certificate programs. According to Powell many Southeast Asian students go into health, computer information systems (CIS), and business fields. Some of them, Hmong students in particular, go into ABE/GED or HSED (high school equivalency degree) programs, particularly if they are undocumented refugees. Latino/as, mainly Mexicans, are now the largest group at MTC, but there were none in this BW3 course although they have comprised up to one-fourth of the highest ESL course at times.

After taking ESL courses and, possibly, Basic Writing and other pre-college courses students can go into English composition. The basic skills courses are considered the educational equivalent of grades nine to twelve. Alternatively students can go directly to college transfer courses in Arts and Sciences. When students apply for entry to MTC's programs beyond the Alternative Learning Division, they must take a placement test, the

ASSET (Assessment of Skills for Successful Entry and Transfer), an ACT program. As the COMPASS test (Computer-Adaptive Placement Assessment and Support System) has an ESL component plans were in place to begin giving it in fall 1999 to ESL students who want to go to academic programs.

The ESL program is "open entry-open exit," meaning that to some extent students can come and go as they please and place themselves into the courses they wish to take. Students are mainly advised and placed when they arrive for registration, based on an individual conference with an instructor. For the Basic Education courses, scores on the Test of Adult Basic English (TABE), which tests reading level, determine which level students will enter. No credits or grades on an A to F scale are given. Still, in BW3, individual assignments were graded on point or letter scales. At the end of the semester, instructors enter their course grades on-line into the MTC computer system, using these codes: S = students can demonstrate some of the competencies identified for a particular course; P = students should not repeat the class, as they are competent in the proficiencies; U = unsatisfactory progress, which is rarely given as long as students demonstrate some competencies; N = enrolled but never attended; W = withdrew from course. Political pressures as well as student achievement come to bear in assigning these grades, as a May 6, 1999, electronic mail message from Maureen Powell to all ALD instructors attests:

> It is important that you assign P to students who complete a level or a class and will not be returning to that class. We do not look good in the state because we have been reporting fewer successful completions (P) of classes than most other districts. Please keep the grade of P in mind when assigning grades this semester.

## MTC's Core Abilities

As part of its mission MTC has established the Core Ability Program, which it is implementing in about 20 programs in the college: "eight core abilities that support you [the student] as a life-long learner on the job, at home, and in the community. Core Abilities are integrated into each course throughout your learning at MTC" (Core Abilities brochure). The core abilities are: communication; critical thinking; ethics; global awareness; mathematics; science and technology; self-awareness; and social interaction. According to the brochure, 'Once you get the job, local and regional employers believe your performance in the Core Abilities will help you: keep the job; increase your earning power; increase the number of career opportunities available to you; develop life-long learning skills." The brochure also links the core abilities to the particular skills "that employers say are important to your success." Although the Core Ability Program is not implemented in the ALD, Powell developed a "Course Outcome Summary" for the Basic Writing class that incorporated some of the core abilities and linked the course objectives to others. Mirroring the Core Abilities, eight "competencies and performance standards" were included in the BW3 Course Outcome Summary, included here:

> 1. Use correct grammar. 2. Apply rules of mechanics. 3. Apply spelling rules and exceptions. 4. Compose complete sentences. 5. Use resource materials. 6. Create written documents. 7. Use interpersonal skills. 8. Participate as a team/group member.

Overlap between the college's Core Abilities and the BW3 course's Outcomes appeared mainly in producing written work and developing group skills.

Students' Educational Backgrounds

According to Powell students in ESL courses levels 4 and 5 have normally been educated in their own countries, having earned a BA or BS. In the Basic Skills 3 classes, 30 to 40% of the students have advanced degrees; many others have bachelor's degrees. In some cases, teachers make "deals" with advanced students—they may stay in a class if they are willing to act as tutors to other students. However, she noted, low-level ABE students often leave classes when they are put with more highly educated students. This situation was the case in the BW3 course I studied.

The Setting

MTC's Downtown Campus is housed in a renovated brick, four-story former high school building that occupies a city block near the main street. A parking garage sits directly across the street but parking is always in short supply. The interior of the building is pleasant, signs announcing activities and events line the walls. The first floor houses the library, information and registration desks, ceramics and jewelry-making studios, and a few classrooms. The library is linked to the community college system of six libraries; its online catalog includes the resources available at all locations, and interlibrary loans are available. The Learning Center, on the second floor, offers students reference books, computers, and staff assistants who can tutor students individually. It is open ten hours a day. The student lounge, with computers, and the offices of the

Alternative Learning Division, including the ESL program, are also on the second floor. The cafeteria and classrooms are located on the third floor. The computer laboratory is on the fourth floor, but the door is locked unless a class is using it. Students can also use computers in the library from 8:30 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Thursday and until 4 p.m. on Friday, as well as Saturday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The BW3 classroom has white walls, industrial gray carpeting, and a large whiteboard on the front wall. A VCR cart and overhead projector are kept in the room permanently. Students sit on metal and plastic chairs at tables that can accommodate two or three. There are no windows; there is one door at the back of the room. The sterile room could feel claustrophobic after a few hours, but students often stay in it during breaks; some classes meet for a total of four hours in this room.

## The Basic Writing 3 Course

The course under observation in the spring of 1999 was a section of Basic Writing 3, a pre-college writing skills class. At the Downtown Campus, BW3 meets twice a week, for 1¾ hours each time. In spring 1999 the course met from 10:00 to 11:45 a.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, with one to two hours per week spent in the computer lab. The objective of BW3 is to provide students with sufficient writing and research skills for them to enter freshman composition courses. The Oral Skills class that Powell taught met immediately before the writing class, from 8:00 to 9:45 a.m. In spring 1999, Powell also taught BW3 for the first three weeks while she sought a replacement teacher. The first part-time teacher hired for this class was not able to teach it because of scheduling

conflicts. She had taught a number of the BW3 students the previous semester. By the third week of the semester Powell hired George Cleary to become the Basic Writing 3 teacher. Already a part-time instructor at the Airport campus, Cleary taught communications skills there to native English speakers and ESL to Mexican immigrants and migrant workers at a satellite outreach location.

The Instructor

George Cleary is a white man in his forties, married to a Mexican woman; they have two children. A native of Yankton, South Dakota, he earned his bachelor's degree at Yankton College where he majored in English with a minor in Spanish. He describes Yankton as a small liberal arts college that "went broke," despite hiring retired professors from other institutions at lower salaries. After graduation, "looking for fluency" in Spanish, he studied at the University of Mexico in Mexico City. He returned to the United States and taught high school Spanish in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He continued his studies by earning a master's degree in English literature, with more study of Spanish, at the University of South Dakota, which he described as "virtually unknown, but high quality." He went next to Spain's Canary Islands and worked in an American high school, teaching physics, algebra, geography, and history, "a smattering of everything, . . . whatever they needed." He came back to the United States and continued to teach, then earned a "bilingual specialist master's" at San Diego State University (INT 2/9/99). Finally he entered the Ph.D. program at a Mexican university, but was overwhelmed by the dangers of living in Mexico City and moved to Acapulco. He taught English at the state university's tourism department; married his wife, a dentist; and opened an English-

language academy. His students' average age was 20; they were mainly high school graduates, a high level of academic attainment in an area where, according to Cleary the average educational level is third grade. In addition to running his school, he taught part-time at the American University in Acapulco, and at local businesses and hotels, for about 10 years.

Cleary and his family came to Monroe in the summer of 1997 so that their children could go to school in the United States. In addition to part-time teaching jobs, he works about 20 hours a week as a medical interpreter in Spanish. He is also writing a communications textbook and articles about teaching, in addition to having responsibilities for child care and housework. At our second interview, June 19, 1999, he was about to embark on teaching medical Spanish and was developing materials forthis course.

His wife works full-time for the county health board; the benefits she receives from her job allow him to work part-time without receiving any. Cleary would like to find a full-time teaching job in the area, but his experience has been discouraging. He holds in reserve the idea of returning to Acapulco to continue running his language academy, which his mother-in-law and native-English-speaking teachers currently manage. His ideal would be to find a full-time, nine-month teaching job in the United States that would allow him and his family to spend summers in Mexico.

The Part-time Instructors' Union at MTC

Although the approximately 350 full-time faculty at MTC have had a labor union since the 1970s, not until 1996 were 750 part-time instructors unionized. (The proportion of full-time to part-time faculty at MTC closely matches the statistics reported in Chapter 2). In the first contract the part-timers' union negotiated a 17% raise over the two years of the contract, from $22.00 to $26.75 per contact hour. Benefits include holiday and sick pay but not health insurance. In addition to contact hours, instructors are supposed to be paid at the same rate for meetings with students, preparation time, and student assessment. Staff meetings and other meetings that are considered mandatory, including mentor-mentee meetings, are paid at $22.74. However, according to the union's president, Donald Boucher, instructors in the ESL program received a memorandum from Maureen Powell stating that attendance at meetings would be considered voluntary as the ALD did not have the funds to pay for meetings (INT 10/16/99). The union president maintains that the ALD is the most profitable division of the college, as a result of its almost exclusive use of part-time faculty (87 part time compared with 15 full time). At MTC as a whole the annual turnover rate among part-time instructional staff is 33%, which, Boucher maintains, comments on the working conditions at MTC. Of the 20 pending union grievances in the whole college, he noted, 17 were lodged against the ALD, for contract violations such as the lack of free parking, not getting paid for meetings and the pay rate for meetings, part-time instructors working over 50% and not getting full-timer instructors' pay, and not being included in the state retirement system as required by law. When the first part-time instructors' union contract expired in 1998 negotiations went to arbitration over issues that include how teaching assignments are

made, considering part-timer instructors' seniority in applications for full-time openings, and linking part-time instructors' pay to the full-time instructors' wage scale. The contract was settled in early 2000.

The Students

This section provides in-depth biographies of six of the students in the class, three who stayed for most or all of the semester, and three who left the class at various points in the term. First a brief description of all the students who took the class. The largest ethic and linguistic group were five Russians: three retirees, Boris Grodsky, Olga Dubinsky, and Irena Dimitrieva; and two younger women married to Americans, Katarina Stevenson, 26, and Petra Turner, 28. The retirees were part of a group of Russian Jewish refugees who came to Monroe as part of a resettlement program coordinated by Jewish Social Services that began in 1989 after Gorbachev opened the doors for Jews to leave the Soviet Union.[6] Many of these Russians who came to Monroe already had family in the area, as Russians had immigrated here during the past 20 years. All of the Russian students in the class had at least a bachelor's degree. In addition, Olga had an M.D./Ph.D., Irena a Ph.D. in mineralogy, and Petra a Ph.D. in philosophy; Boris and Katarina were trained as engineers, although Katarina did not practice the profession.

The class also included a family of Palestinian siblings, Leila Hasan, 19, Rana Hasan, 18, and their brother Ali Hasan, 21, who were born and grew up in the United Arab Emirates. They had come to Monroe, where their grandmother lives, to go to

[6] Personal communication, Sophia Moroz, Resettlement Coordinator, Jewish Social Services, 10/4/99.

university, although Ali had studied dentistry for one year in Slovakia and two years of business management. Murat Kural, a man in his twenties from Turkey, was another spouse of an American whom he had met when she was an exchange student in Turkey; he hoped eventually to attend the university. Midway through the semester, Murat returned to Turkey for an extended visit and did not return to the class.

Three Korean women in the class were married to current or former international students at the university. Among them were Minji Park, 35, Sik-Yu Lee, 24, and Hye-Ra Song, 33. Likewise, Atsuko Ono, 33, from Japan, was the wife of a pharmaceuticals company worker. Two women from Taiwan, Sylvia Lin, 37, and Susie Zhang, 37, were married to graduate students at the university, as was a Chinese woman, Wing-Pui Lam 32. All of these women held bachelor's degrees or higher and had aspirations for graduate study. Two refugees included a Laotian man, Saky Chang, 24, and Ahmad Jodo, 32, from Sierra Leone. The only Latino/a student was young Dominican woman, Rosa Umana, who joined the class in the third week and attended sporadically. The two native English speakers who attended the class stayed less than a month. In the middle of the semester a Chilean woman and a Chinese woman attended the class briefly. According to Richard Dresser, one of the full-time ESL teachers, the student population in this course was typical, as the ESL population at MTC is constantly changing. He considered the number of Russians and Palestinians higher than usual, and the absence of Mexicans rare.

Many of the students who regularly attended this class had taken it before, in the fall of 1998, but with different instructors. In keeping with the open-entry, open-exit policy of the division, students could repeatedly enroll in the basic education courses.

(According to the one of the full-time ESL instructors, students re-take courses for a variety of reasons, including not achieving the necessary proficiency to move on, not having completed enough coursework, feeling insecure about their capabilities, and wanting to do something with their time, and do it cheaply.) Some students were concurrently enrolled in ESL Level 5, the highest ESL class, which met five days a week just before BW3.

Students Who Stayed Most of the Semester.

Although all three Palestinian siblings participated in this class throughout the semester, I interviewed only the sisters because I was seeking gender balance among the students whom I studied in-depth. As it turned out, of the students who stayed in the class, all those whom I interviewed were women. Of those who left, two were male and one female. Rana and Leila, mentioned above, are Palestinians who were born and raised in Abu Dhabi where their father works as an accountant for a Japanese oil company and their mother is a homemaker. Their parents have four younger children at home, ranging from 14 years old to a nine-month-old boy born on a visit to the United States. In July 1998, the three oldest siblings came to Monroe to live with their grandmother, who "was living here from a long time," 18 or 19 years, and who "made immigration papers" for them (INT 4/26/99). Like their grandmother before them, who emigrated to the United States in part to provide educational opportunities for her children, they understood that education "here in the United States is better than there . . . and the life also. It's easier to find a job here." Their parents are planning to emigrate to the United States when their 52-year old father retires. In the United Arab Emirates, "the schools there are really good

but the universities are not that good . . . and jobs are really good [in the United States] so, they [their parents] are planning to stay here" for the sake of their younger children (INT 4/26/99). The Hasans described the discriminatory treatment they as noncitizens had received living in the United Arab Emirates despite being born there: "The Emirates people first and then comes the other ones." For example, for "hospitals or something like that they don't have to pay. But the other [people] . . . they have to," as well as having free education, for which nonnatives also have to pay. In addition, "the Emirates people live in special houses for them . . . villas [which are] really nice" and reserved for citizens. In contrast, "Palestinians . . . live in apartments [that are] not so" (INT 4/26/99).

Leila and Rana had studied English at school in the United Arab Emirates. Leila had also studied French and one year of computer science at the college level. She was contemplating switching to Management Information Systems (MIS) rather than continuing with computer science because the language requirements seemed less stringent. The required TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) score for computer science is 550, but she had obtained a score of 500 both times she had taken the test. Her long-term plans were "to finish my four years in here and then apply for a job, to stay to spend my life here." Rana also planned to go to the university. Undecided about her major area of study, she was leaning toward computers or business, perhaps also studying MIS, "then I'll find a job in this field." By the late spring of the semester, all three siblings had been accepted to the one of the state university's campuses in a larger city.

The other student who lasted most of the semester was Minji Park, a 35-year-old Korean piano teacher and mother of two young daughters (INT 7/27/99). She had come to Monroe about 11 years ago, because "my husband want to study here and he got a Ph.D. here" in sociology. After receiving his degree her husband became a research associate at the university. In Korea Minji had earned her bachelor's degree in clothing and textiles from Yon-Sei University, a large private university in Seoul that is more than one hundred years old, and has a relationship with the University of the Midwest. Minji had begun her English study in middle school and studied a three-course English sequence at Yon-Sei University that focused on conversation and reading, but less on writing. After graduation she worked for a year as a shoe designer. The university's flagship campus had accepted Minji as a student for a second bachelor's degree in voice and music education. Her goal was to become a music teacher, which she estimated would take about three years, depending on how many credits the university would accept from her undergraduate degree. She too would like to stay in the United States after completing her degree. Minji participated actively in BW3 and her attendance was regular until mid-April, when her mother came to visit for a month. In addition, after the research papers were due, Cleary returned to grammar lessons, which Minji felt she already knew.

Students Who Left the Class.

Katarina Stevenson is a Russian from St. Petersburg who married an American and moved to Monroe in December 1998 (INT 6/22/99). She has one son, Pavel, who entered first grade in the fall of 1999. Katarina, 27, met her husband when she was

working for a Swedish furniture trading company in St. Petersburg. She earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering, specializing in shipbuilding, but did not work in the field because "in Russia it was hard to find a job as a mechanical engineer" and "the salary . . . they offer didn't satisfy my interests." She had previously studied Swedish and German; she studied English after she met her husband. They also called, wrote, and sent email to each other daily, and she acquired textbooks to teach herself English. She began ESL classes at MTC in January 1999, when her English was already very fluent. Her husband works as an accountant and teaches accounting at MTC, and Katarina planned to enter the accounting program in the fall without taking additional ESL classes. She noted that although she expects to receive a green card through her marriage, "I don't have the time to work and it's not my plan to work. . . . My husband can provide me with some . . . financial help." Katarina was concurrently enrolled in ESL 5, having dropped the Oral Skills class that met prior to BW3. She deemed this class a "zero" because "it wasn't interesting. The program wasn't interesting. Maybe the teacher couldn't find some interesting topics that could be discussed." She stayed in BW3 class for 10 weeks because, although she felt it was equally boring and too easy, "I didn't want to be home all day alone. Also a couple Russian people are attending this class, just . . . more like a social class." Because she "came to study English, proper English," she avoided talking with "some other people, especially when there were a lot of Chinese people" because "it's very hard to understand Chinese people . . . and I didn't talk to them, just not to take some habits or pronunciations of words." As for her writing, Katarina claimed, "I can write . . . without any mistakes in English" (INT 6/22/99).

The remaining two students can be considered refugees rather than immigrants. Ahmad Jodo fled the civil war that has wracked Sierra Leone, West Africa, since 1991. In the process, he lost contact with most of his family. In Sierra Leone, Ahmad completed school at a high school that he claims is "among the grade A, in the country school list" (INT 6/17/99). Although students had to pay tuition to attend school, Ahmad criticized the quality of education there. Ahmad came to Monroe in May 1997 through a U.S. government refugee resettlement program, specifically through the sponsorship of an African-American businessman he had met while living in Mali for seven years after leaving Sierra Leone. After a falling-out with this sponsor, Ahmad found a Sierra Leonean studying at the university who was looking for a roommate. This new roommate helped Ahmad find a job working in a bakery. Problems developed, however, with this roommate, and ultimately the roommate abandoned the apartment to Ahmad, along with the rent that the roommate owed. Because of these financial burdens, Ahmad took a second job with a taxi company. His financial and housing troubles contributed to his dropping out of MTC by the beginning of March 1999.

Ahmad had begun taking ESL classes at MTC in the fall of 1997, "though it's not my second language," as he speaks Mende, French, English, and West African languages. He would like to study history and government, and eventually to become a lawyer as "it's like a gift in our family. . . my father was a local court chairman . . . like a magistrate" (INT 6/17/99). His current inability to score high enough on the GED tests has prevented him from take college-transfer courses. In addition, because Ahmad did not know how to type or to use a computer, he could only hand-write his BW3 assignments

and was frustrated that Cleary would not accept them. The only black person in class, he felt some vague racism from the other students and identified some comments from the instructor as overtly racist. Still, he acknowledged that his verbal style is off-putting: "I like to argue. And my argument is always bitter, although because it's my tone of talking. It's not that I'm aggressive, or. You know, this is my way of talking, . . . it's natural in me."

Saky Chang, 24, was the other refugee in the class. Born in Laos, he had lived in Thailand from ages one to 14, both inside and just outside the refugee camps (INT 7/7/99). He next went to a refugee camp in the Philippines, where studied English for seven months in a camps. He immigrated with his family—parents and younger brother—to the United States at the age of 15, going first to Dallas, Texas. However, he kept "changing schools because of family problems." The family moved the next year to Stockton, California, which has a large Laotian and Hmong population (Fadiman, 1997), but there was "a lot of gang[s] going on and violence" (INT 7/7/99). An uncle living in Billings, Montana, sent for them and later moved with them to Monroe.

Saky finished high school in Monroe in 1993 since then has worked as a machine operator at a company that manufactures packaging materials. His supervisor has encouraged him to continue his education: "right now they try to push me . . . [to] get involved with them" because he "doesn't want to [hire a] new . . . operator or old operator's explain it too much and make a down time. . . . It costs a lot of money. So they try to push me to, you know, have an agreement or, you know, study." His supervisor has given him a hundred-page manual that describes the workings of the

machinery, but Saky finds the vocabulary difficult, "even [if] I open my dictionary." Although he seems to resist it, Saky reports that the supervisors "try to push me more learning and they try to me be a second supervisor or something. . . . Because I'm be there long enough and know how to fix troubleshooting" (INT 7/7/99). Saky finds a lot of conflict among people in his workplace and would like to leave it. His stated ambition is to become a police officer, but he has little idea yet about what that would entail. Like Ahmad, Saky does not know how to type or use a computer, which contributed to the trouble he had in BW3. He dropped out of BW3 by mid-March. During the summer of 1999 he enrolled in a four-week Reading 2 class, which he called "fun" even though it was demanding. He planned to take one or two ESL courses in the fall 1999 semester, perhaps in reading and writing. As a refugee from Laos he feels he cannot go back, so he will stay in the United States. He lives with his parents and his son; they have recently bought a house in Monroe.

Attendance Patterns.

Originally, about 24 students were registered for the class. At the beginning of the semester only 17 students began the course. Although a few new students attended the course later, enrollment hovered around 16 students for the first two months. At that point there began a gradual decline, with about five students ending the course. (See Figure 4.1.) According to Powell the typical dropout rate for adult basic education is 50%.[7]

[7] Statistics on adult education retention rates are difficult to acquire. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) does not track the retention of ESL students in ABE. "The NCES adult education questionnaire, which is a component of the National Household Education Survey, collects data on individuals who do and do not participate in ABE and ESL classes in the 12-month period prior to the interview. Since we never know whether the adult will take any more ABE or ESL classes, we never know whether they are a dropout or not. It is difficult to know when an adult 'completes' their ABE or ESL

Moreover, she considered this course unusual in that it lasted 16 weeks, compared with the ESL courses, which last for eight weeks. Powell speculated that many students may not have realized the length of the course when they began it. She noted that the course would be offered on an eight-week cycle in the future. Dean Garcia, however, maintained that the ESL students are "the most consistent attenders" (INT 10/22/99) in the ALD. Comings et al. (1999) support this claim, noting that "The greater likelihood of persistence by immigrant students in ESOL classes is well documented"; their study suggests "that this effect continues as immigrants learn English and move on to ABE and GED programs" (p. 5). Nevertheless, Minji, who had been enrolled in BW3 the previous semester, described a similar attendance pattern in that class, with only a handful of students taking the final examination.

The ESL Program Administrator

Maureen Powell, the lead teacher of the ALD, has worked full-time at MTC since January 1978 (INT 5/18/99). A middle-aged, white woman originally from North Carolina, she started in 1976 as a part-time ESL instructor. Before 1999 she had also filled in as associate dean of the Alternative Learning Division. She works about 60 hours a week setting up classes, hiring teachers, creating budgets, and choosing and ordering textbooks, supplies, and computers. In the spring 1999 semester she taught one class; in fall 1998 she had taught four classes. Until the most recent union contract a standard

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classes. Hence it is difficult to calculate a dropout rate" (personal communication, Peter Stowe, NCES, November 8, 1999).

teaching load for full-time instructors in the ALD had been up to 26 contact hours per week; many full-time instructors, including Powell, frequently received release time for administrative duties or to tutor in the Learning Center. With the new contract the maximum contact hour load is 19 classroom hours or 23 Learning Center hours.

The Dean of the Alternative Learning Division

Ricardo Garcia has worked in the Alternative Learning Division of MTC since 1986, first as coordinator; then as dean. A middle-aged Chicano man, Garcia was "born and raised in Texas," but has worked in other institutions of higher education in the

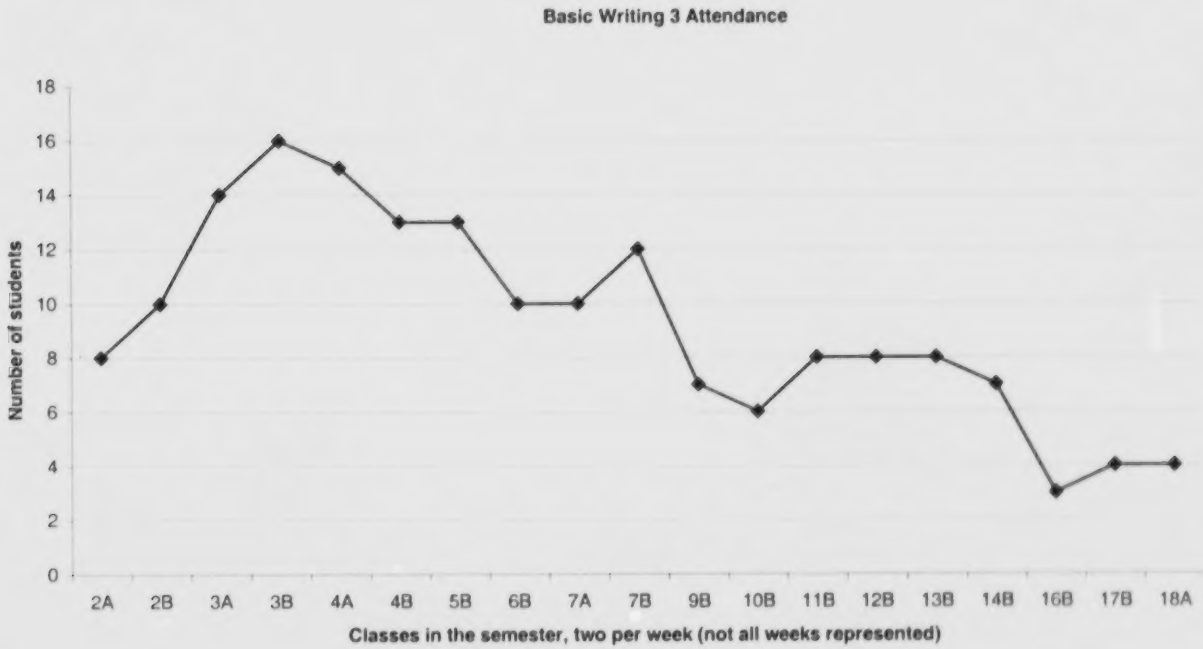


*Figure 4.1 Basic Writing 3 attendance*

Midwest. He studied Spanish and communications as an undergraduate, then earned a master's degree in curriculum and instruction "with an endorsement in learning disabilities." Garcia has "been an instructor of people that were institutions . . . a family counselor . . . an administrator for community-based organizations . . . a diagnostician for learning disabilities. Previous administrative experience in higher education included a stint as "assistant dean at a four-year university, in student affairs" (INT 10/22/99). He has also taught communications at the junior high, high school, and community college levels. His assessment of MTC is that

> There's no better place to work than this institution as far as being creative, trying new ideas, being innovative. That also has its price. But if you like that, I mean, I have a wonderful job, good administration, a president that allows you, that promotes you to be creative, and to work out of the box. And at the same time that creates its own challenges and frustrations and high burnout. . . . The more creative you are, the less support there's going to be out there for you. (INT 10/22/99)

Instructional Patterns

In this section, I summarize classes that I observed at three points in the semester, beginning, middle, and end, to provide a sense of the classroom atmosphere, the curricular choices of the instructor, and the relations among participants. Appendix E contains summaries of all the other classes I observed. As Figure 4.1 showed, student attendance declined steadily over the course of these weeks; despite students' real-world reasons for leaving the course, their experiences within it also played a large role.

My observations of BW3 started on January 19, 1999, in the second week of the semester. In the first week Maureen Powell had assigned students to write summaries of

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s, "I Have a Dream" speech. In class she had reviewed parts of speech and sentence patterns in the textbook, *The Writer's Express: A Paragraph and Essay Text with Readings* (McWhorter, 1997).

Week 2: January 19.

On Tuesday, although Powell intended for students to do peer review of each other's summaries, only two students, Katarina and one of the native English speakers, John, had understood the assignment enough to complete it. Powell reviewed six possible functions of nouns in a sentence. She then passed out a quiz on nouns, offering extra credit for labeling the nouns. Saky didn't understand what was going on with the quiz until Boris, one of the retired Russians, helped him. After 20 minutes Powell asked the students to do an exercise in the textbook, which many students had to share.[8] Next she introduced the topic of the State of the Union Address and led the class in brainstorming topics that the President might cover. For homework students were to watch the address that night, take notes, and compare them with the predictions the students had made.

Returning to the book Powell surveyed the writing process, highlighting freewriting, brainstorming, and selecting paper topics. Then she turned to the book's organization, pointing students to the sections the class would mainly cover. Finally, she directed them to a textbook selection, pointing out how the book uses previewing to prepare students for readings. After having a volunteer read the first paragraph, Powell read the second one aloud then asked the students to read the story as homework.

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[8] On January 19, Powell told the students that the textbook was available in the MTC bookstore for $39. Although MTC publications indicate that instructional materials will be available for in-class use for ALD

Week 3: January 26-28.

On George Cleary's first day, Powell introduced him to the class and left the room. Although she had introduced him as "George," he wrote his name on the board formally, as Mr. Cleary. He took attendance and gathered biographical information about students. When he finished the list he had been given without calling Saky's name, Saky said, "Let's go. . . . Why do we have to stay here?," rising to leave. He sat down when Cleary asked the remaining students to write their names on a sheet of paper. Cleary told the class that he was developing his own textbook and would let them know whether they would use that or the assigned text. When he then asked the students how far they had reached in the book, Minji indicated the last exercise that Powell had assigned them. Cleary did not take this assignment up.

On one side of the room Rosa and Petra were talking to each other. Ten minutes later Cleary whispered to them to be quiet. On the board he listed the kinds of writing the class would cover: description, narration, argumentation, and exposition. He introduced static description, comparing it to using a camera. Next Cleary explained metaphor, asking students to supply words to complete phrases like "as cold as" and "as small as." On the board he wrote "brainstorm," explaining that students would begin every paper by brainstorming. He then asked them to brainstorm words about their houses.

After a break Cleary explained how to cluster ideas after brainstorming, eliciting suggestions on how to order the resulting ideas. Saky offered alphabetical order; Cleary suggested spatial or chronological, or "some other kind of logical order." Again Petra and

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students who do not wish to purchase them, neither Powell nor Cleary mentioned this option to the class

Rosa chatted while Cleary talked. He circulated through the classroom, evaluating students' brainstorming. Cleary next introduced alliteration, suggesting its use in creating a catchy title. He explained his formatting requirements for paragraphs, asking students to type their assignments. He reviewed the assignment and gave his three rules for students: "1. Talk to me. 2. Come to class. 3. Do all of your work. If it's hard, then rule 1" (FN 1/26). When a student asked for his email address Cleary wrote it on the board.

On Thursday Cleary confirmed that the class would use *The Writer's Express* instead of his materials. He asked students to buy it, saying, "it's an expensive book, but education is expensive" (TR 1/28). He introduced topic sentences and the class worked through three sets of exercises from the textbook. Cleary had students play Twenty Questions to practice narrowing down ideas about a topic. He told them to read an article, "Divorce: Sometimes a Bad Notion," from the textbook and to complete three more sets of exercises for homework. Cleary then discussed dynamic descriptions in more detail, asking students to write one for the next class. Saky once again was confused, asking what they were doing. Cleary repeated that they should write one paragraph, and suggested topics such as a Christmas meal, a picnic, a trip, a first date.

These initial classes demonstrate the mixture of literacy activities that Cleary hoped would set the stage for students to write paragraphs in the course, from using the readings and exercises in the textbook to teaching the steps of process writing. This description also shows that from the start there were varied levels of student

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during my observations. In fact Cleary did not know about the policy (INT 6/19/99).

understanding and engagement in the class. Notably absent is an attempt on Cleary's part to get to know the students' backgrounds, abilities, and academic goals.

Week 7: February 23-25.

On Tuesday, the computer laboratory door was locked and Cleary found Maureen Powell to open it. As he returned papers to students he mentioned that not everyone had given him homework. When Saky tried to give him a handwritten paper, Cleary told him to type it on the computer. He instructed students to correct their papers on the computer, then to do research about their countries on the Internet. Students helped each other with computing while Cleary assisted a new student. Students worked for almost an hour; again Saky asked for clarification on what they were doing.

On Thursday Powell's class ran late, and Cleary's class congregated outside the door, reluctant to interrupt. Before he returned students' papers, Cleary explained the origins of the names of the days of the week. When the Leila and Rana Hasan entered the class, Cleary again asked them how long they'd have to wear their head scarves, joking that they were having a bad hair day. Cleary asked if women are second-class citizens in their country. Leila answered no. Then Cleary introduced a general discussion of women's status in different countries.

Next he returned student papers, telling Irena that now that she had corrected her mistakes on the computer, he could "read the meaning," (FN 2/25) not worrying about the errors. He encouraged Rana to vary her sentences. When Ahmad offered him a handwritten paper, he gave it back to him to type on the computer the following Tuesday. The class worked on a transitions exercise in the textbook. Next Cleary discussed an

essay the class had read, "Politically Correct Language," listing "politically correct" synonyms for various terms on the board. He asked students if their languages have politically correct words and told them not to be politically incorrect in English.

Directing students to a textbook exercise on using supporting details, Cleary asked for the definition of anecdote. He suggested always using examples but not too many quotations. In response to questions about punctuation and capitalization, Cleary told students to "always experiment" (FN 2/25) and he would correct their papers. Next the class did exercises reviewing run-on sentences and offering solutions. Students worked in small groups as Cleary circulated to help. After the break, students worked on an exercise on being specific. One question asked about the benefits of the computer, which students brainstormed individually then presented to the class. For homework, Cleary asked them to write a paragraph about what the computer means to them.

In these mid-semester classes, Cleary continued to use the textbook for grammar and punctuation exercises. By the middle of the semester, however, Cleary digressed more from his lesson plans to discuss spontaneous topics such as the status of women worldwide. The description of the computer laboratory class shows a typical range of student engagement; as was common, Saky remained confused and relied on other students to help him. In this description Cleary's mixed messages about accepting handwritten work as well as his valuing of mechanical correctness in papers were evident.

Week 12: April 13-15.

On Tuesday, only a handful of students were in the lab. Cleary was puzzled by the decline in attendance, but told me that other teachers had reassured him that it was typical.

On Thursday, Cleary began with an exercise on pronoun reference then led a discussion of classification and categorization. The students chose topics and offered suggestions for classifying them. Next Cleary had them work on a textbook exercise on classification. He pointed out the textbook's discussion of transitional words. Students worked in pairs to write a paragraph about something that they could easily classify, such as friends or entertainment. Olga handed in her research paper and said she was off for a two-week vacation in Spain. By the end of the class, only the Hasans remained.

This final description conveys Cleary's attempts to follow the syllabus despite the students' dwindling attendance patterns. The realization that the retired Russians were willing to leave the class for vacation seemed to demoralize Cleary, as did the dropout rate. At the same time, the curriculum's heavy focus on isolated sentence-level structures rather than meaningful writing did not change.

Client Reporting

On the last day Powell told Cleary to enter grade reports into the computer system. After his class she showed him how to do "client reporting" on the Learning Center computers. Of the students who stopped attending, only John and Petra had officially withdrawn from the class. Powell told Cleary that teachers are supposed to track down their students when they do not return, and, if necessary, enter their status on

the computer. She asked if he had administered the posttest to follow up on the writing test, but he had not known he was supposed to. The posttest score would have provided a score to enter in the computer report. The computer screen also had categories for the number of student hours in class (which affects the funding of instructional positions), whether students had become citizens or registered to vote, and what their Personal Education Plans included. Cleary had not known about these reporting requirements, thus had none of the information. Powell helped him through the complicated procedure as Cleary entered the information he had.

## Summary

This chapter has briefly described the setting of the ALD at MTC, in particular, the BW3 course participants and representative events. The description foreshadows the contradictory mission of the college and the range of goals and backgrounds of the students. The next four chapters of this dissertation draw on this background to analyze the discourses circulating at MTC in Chapter 5, the overt curriculum in Chapter 6, the hidden curricula in Chapter 7, and the students and their subsequent experiences in Chapter 8.

# CHAPTER 6: THE OVERT CURRICULUM OF BASIC WRITING 3

Chapter 5 showed how the various Discourses circulating at Monroe Technical College constructed and reflected the competing goals of the Basic Writing 3 students, the instructor, and the administrators of the Alternative Learning Division. Although such Discourses largely construct the classroom and institutional environments in which learning academic literacy occurs, the curriculum and its implementation also play an important, perhaps central, role. The curriculum includes both overt, or stated, disciplinary content and instructional goals and the hidden, or covert, lessons of socialization. The enactment of the curriculum functions as another mechanism through which the power relations of the institution and the agents on the educational field play out. This chapter examines in detail the enactment of the overt and hidden curricula of BW3. I focus on the ways in which the instructor mediated his position in the institution by means of the curriculum, and I discuss the forms of accommodation and resistance that students adopted.

It is important to look not only at what the curriculum consists of but also at how it is transmitted and how students receive and respond to it. The comparison in Chapter 5 of the public rhetoric of MTC to its actual practices offers a model for the examination of the hidden and overt curricula of BW3. As Gee, Hull, and Lankshear write,

> In the case of any Discourse we can make a distinction between espoused goals and values and the goals and values that actually emerge in practice. These are not always, not even usually, in complete agreement with each other in any Discourse. Very often there is tension and even contradiction between them. The distinction here is similar to the distinction that has often been made in the case of schooling between the 'overt curriculum' and the 'hidden curriculum'. (1996, p. 22)

Even as Discourses are rarely distinct from one another, the distinctions between hidden and overt forms of curricula may likewise be blurred.

As Chapter 2 described, ESL and composition courses function as gatekeepers to college-transfer or vocational programs (Shaughnessy, 1977). These courses are therefore a pivotal locus of student preparation for and enculturation into academic discourses. Ideally the overt curriculum of a basic writing course teaches aspects of the academic literacies that will enable students to undertake college-level work (Purves, 1988). However, as this chapter demonstrates, in the spring of 1999 the overt curriculum was only superficially realized in BW3. Instead the multiple lessons of the hidden curriculum carried more force. Scholars have complicated the reproduction model of educational inequality to account for students' agency as they confront both the hidden and overt curricula (Apple, 1990, 1995; Margolis, Soldatenko, and Gair [in press]). Indeed, this study shows that although adult ESL students from all types of backgrounds themselves recognize the importance of English language literacy to their future success, they do not unthinkingly accept the curriculum that they encounter.

According to the course description BW3 serves "adults who have writing skills at a high school level and who want to improve their writing skills for further education, employment, or life." As the multiple goals included in this statement indicate, the institution expects to find variety in the students' educational and occupational goals and reasons for taking the course. The data from this study bear witness to the ways in which this variety takes shape. For this reason—as well as for fundamental pedagogic reasons—the overt curriculum of the course must be considered in relation to the range of students' backgrounds and goals. In BW3 students' life experiences before entering MTC and their goals for themselves after completing basic education were more varied than those typical of students in a traditional four-year college. A larger study could examine how the curriculum affected all students, whether or not they held further academic goals. However, although these basic education courses are considered high school level, they are offered in a college context. For the population of interest in this study the primary purpose of these basic education courses is to prepare students for college-level work. Thus I limit my analysis to questions of academic preparation rather than what students might learn for other purposes, such as "living skills." Chapter 2 summarized current theories of second language composition. In terms of how students are prepared to undertake college-level writing it is relevant to compare these theories and the enacted curriculum of BW3.

Theorizing the Overt Curriculum

To look at the overt curriculum I use two models developed by Bernstein (1990, 1996) to explicate more fully what Linda McNeil calls "defensive teaching" (1986, Ch. 7). She defines "defensive teaching" as a mode that the high school teachers in her study adopted as "ways of accommodating to a school where their only power came from the classroom" (p. 157). "They teach 'defensively,' choosing modes of presentation and evaluation that they hope will make their workload more efficient and create as little student resistance as possible" (McNeil, p. 158). "Defensive teaching" characterizes Cleary's instruction in BW3 because of his low status in the institution, poor working conditions, and lack of training and support in teaching second-language composition.

Bernstein's overarching concern in developing these models is with how educational institutions regulate people's access to the "distribution of knowledge" and other societal resources (1996, p. 8). As my concern here is with how immigrant college students gain access to the resources of higher education in the United States, Bernstein's work strikes a sympathetic chord. His concepts of framing/classification and the pedagogic device facilitate an analysis of the enactment of the curriculum, especially in terms of the relationship between power and pedagogy. He cautions against the application of classification/framing solely "as the means of distinguishing or describing forms of classroom practice or curricula" (1996, p. 3), although it is a very useful framework. In addition, it is imperative to link these descriptions to the ways in which discursive practices, which Bernstein equates to "pedagogic relations," regulate and distribute power within the classroom and the institution. For example the high proportion of lecturing that Cleary engaged in asserted his control of who speaks when in the classroom. As for the pedagogic device, one of its benefits for the multilevel analysis

that this study undertakes is that the pedagogic device "enable[s] the integration of macro levels of analysis with institutional and interactional levels" (1996, p. 3).

First, the classification/ framing model enables an analysis of the relations of pedagogic control both outside and inside the classroom. In a given situation framing and classification can be identified as weak or strong. Focusing on the power relations generally external to the pedagogic interactions, classification "examine[s] relations between categories, whether these categories are between agencies, between agents, between discourses, between practices" (1996, p. 20). Classification is generally considered in terms of how it creates and enforces the borders between academic disciplines, such as English literature, English composition, and English as a second language. Yet it can also be applied to distinctions made between other types of categories. For example, in BW3 two related categories of agents were native and nonnative speakers of English. These categories are distinct on many levels, not just in comparing students to each other or to the instructor.[9] As a result, I consider the distinction between native and nonnative speakers of English as strongly classified. A second and quite distinct categorization of agents is by educational attainment level. In BW3, this category was weakly demarcated, although its effects were compelling. I discuss these categories and their characterizations below. Categories of the discourses present included the construction of the discourse of ESL students and ESL composition, as Chapter 5 examined.

Framing relates to the regulation of communication within specified categories of power. "Framing is concerned with the controls on communication in local, interactional pedagogic relations: between parents/children, teacher/pupil, social worker/client, etc." (Bernstein, 1996, p. 26). I characterize the framing in BW3 course as generally strong, with the instructor maintaining control over many aspects of the course. In contrast a weakly framed course would be one that relied more extensively on students' goals, ideas, and desires to guide the curriculum and the instructional methods used. Framing refers to "the nature of the control over: the selection of the communication; its sequencing . . . ; its pacing (the rate of expected acquisition); the criteria; and the control over the social base which makes this transmission possible" (1996, p. 27).

[9] Indeed, although two native English speakers were in the class for short periods, it was not their presence alone, nor the presence of the native-English-speaking instructor, that demarcated these categories. That is,

These first four aspects of framing comprise the category of *instructional discourse* (ID); the last item, control of the social base, creates the *regulative discourse* (RD). These discourses are interrelated: "The instructional discourse is always embedded in the regulative discourse, and the regulative discourse is the dominant discourse" (1996, p. 28). The regulative discourse affects the dominant standards of communication outside the classroom and what is considered acceptable in terms of curricular content and communication, for example what cultural forms count as academic rather than expressions of popular culture. As with the Discourses examined in Chapter 5, the relationship between these discourses affects and constructs the power relations at work.

The second model of Bernstein's that is highly useful here is the pedagogic device. Like classification, the pedagogic device supports an examination of how ESL composition is positioned relative to both the larger world of composition and the act of writing in general. The pedagogic device

> provides the intrinsic grammar of pedagogic discourse through *distributive rules, recontextualizing rules, and rules of evaluation*. These rules themselves are hierarchically related in the sense that the nature of the distributive rules regulates the recontextualizing rules, which in turn regulate the rules of evaluation. (1990, p. 180, emphasis original)

Analysis of the rules of the pedagogic device has important implications for ESL students, whose construction as less academic than native English speakers was demonstrated in Chapter 5. For example the distributive rules of the pedagogic device affect the selection of knowledge that is made available to students. This analysis also carries weight in terms of the relationship between disciplinary content and the status and working conditions of ESL instructors, particularly part-time academic laborers like George Cleary. Instructors laboring in "service" areas such as composition and ESL face the results of the lower status accorded to these content areas than to traditionally high status areas such as literature or the sciences. Both of Bernstein's models help frame an examination of the overt curriculum of BW3, but to look at what happened in the classroom I begin with classification/framing.

Classification of Basic Writing 3

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immigrants whose native language is not English are constructed as nonnative speakers in every aspect of their lives, not just in school.

Recall that classification is concerned with the definition and maintenance of different kinds of curricular categories. Although Bernstein in general relates classification to describing the boundaries within and between subject areas, his model also allows for the consideration of pedagogic agents and discourses as subjects of classification. Later in this chapter I use the recontextualizing rules of the pedagogic device to examine the construction and positioning of second language composition. The present section uses the notion of classification to clarify the distinctions between nonnative and native English speakers and between more and less educated students. Understanding how these distinctions are created is illuminating not only in itself but also because these classifications of pedagogic agents themselves impinged on the curriculum by shifting its focus.

Although the institution classifies BW3 as a basic education course the predominance of nonnative speakers in the course compromised the enactment of a basic writing curriculum. The process of constructing ESL students as "other" in the classroom can be seen when Cleary was learning the names of Leila, Rana, and Ali Hasan. He commented, "That's a great name, Rana. Those are very unusual names for us." The use of 'us' here establishes an insider/outsider relationship, despite the lack of a referent for 'us.' At the same time Cleary constructed Saky as "kind of half-Laotian, half-American," because he had lived in the United States for 10 years, implying that national identity is a personal attribute that must attenuate over time. As an American Cleary claimed that he was "in the minority" here (TR 1/26/99). These distinctions reinforced Cleary's identity as a native English speaker and an American citizen. Given his low status in the institution and society in general as a part-time academic worker, this process may have been more meaningful for him than it may be for others.

This distinction between native and nonnative English speakers bolstered Cleary's pedagogic authority within the classroom. It carried over to the curriculum in labeling ESL students as underprepared for college-level writing. Because of the construction of ESL students' identities the curricular focus of BW3 shifted from composition to grammar. Cleary explained how he handled teaching native compared to nonnative speakers, by

> giv[ing] the same writing assignments but you have to focus differently on the grammatical aspects, you know, the technical aspects. Because coming into English as a second language, you're going to run into certain areas that are just gonna be classical errors that are going to pop up [such as the third person singular ending]. (INT 6/19/99)

Because this study did not compare the BW3 course to Cleary's other composition course, I do not know whether he allocated more time to composition than to grammar in the course for native speakers. In BW3 grammar took center stage, transforming it from a writing course into a more traditional ESL grammar course. This is one example of Bernstein's explanation that "classification strength is the means by which power relations are transformed into specialized discourses" (1996, p. 3). The strong classification that separates native from nonnative speakers functions both inside

and outside the classroom to turn language learning into a specialized discourse. In this Discourse perhaps more than others the high stakes involved for English learners bring into relief the power relations between the agents involved. Cleary's technical knowledge of English grammar and pronunciation reinforced his role as an expert and the students' roles as novices.

Distinctions between the more and less educated students were weakly classified in the classroom, as students' educational attainment levels were not a public aspect of their identity in the way that their knowledge of languages was. Although some of these differences emerged in haphazard ways, in a mixed class like BW3 such differences tend to be smoothed over rather than highlighted. It is important to note that Cleary did not have the detailed information about students' educational backgrounds that my questionnaire collected. Nor did he seek this information by means of his own questionnaires or student journal entries. In occasional discussions, however, he learned various things about students' backgrounds: For example, Boris had been an engineer and Minji was currently a Korean language teacher. Cleary's lack of systematic knowledge about students' backgrounds meant that he could not explicitly tailor the curriculum to address the students' needs or draw on their strengths. It is perhaps because of his lack of time that he did not attempt to gather much information about students' backgrounds and objectives. In the first interview he responded to the question, "How do you deal with these educational levels [of students in the class]?":

> They don't exist. . . . Because it's a homogenous class in the sense that we're all one class. And within every class you have tremendous differences. You have students who are very successful because they've had such a wonderful background. And they've had the advantage of more education. In a typical classroom you just get tremendous range. And it's just treating them as individuals and looking at their level and trying to bring them up. (INT 2/9/99)

This somewhat contradictory answer shows the gap between Cleary's ideal of teaching and the reality of its enactment. He seems to say that because differences always exist among students it is not worthwhile to identify them. Yet he also recognized the educational advantages that some students bring with them. The advantages of some students, such as the Russians and the spouses of university students or workers, had an effect on the enacted curriculum.

Classroom interactions reinforced the educational stratification of the students rather than helping to bridge the distances between them. For example the unstated prerequisite of word-processing consistently hampered Saky and Ahmed in their attempts to hand in assigned essays. The better-educated students had learned these computer skills in other settings or during previous semesters at MTC. On a few occasions early in the semester Cleary accepted handwritten essays from students, but as the semester progressed, he turned the papers back, telling Saky and Ahmad to type them in the computer lab. Yet since neither student knew how to type or use the computer such directives were frustrating and futile. Although it was not within the scope of Cleary's

course content to teach word-processing, his refusals to accept students' essays contributed to the their feelings of inadequacy and not being heard.

In addition the better-educated students' superior grasp of the metalanguage of language learning not only enabled them to understand quickly what Cleary was referring to in grammar lessons but also allowed them to ask corresponding questions. Finally, in terms of their writing, the better-educated students consistently produced essays that conformed to Cleary's expectations. Again it did not seem to occur to him that students' educational preparation contributed to this ability and that therefore some students needed explicit teaching to help them reach this level. These two kinds of classification in the BW3 classroom are not the only examples, but they demonstrate how classification affects the implementation of the curriculum in both explicit and implicit ways. They also show how the curriculum is created in its enactment when presented to various sorts of real students.

Framing of Basic Writing 3

Framing includes the following five aspects of pedagogic communication: the selection of the communication; its sequencing; its pacing; the criteria for choosing and evaluating the communication; and the control over the social base that enables the previous aspects to be realized. This section examines each aspect in relation to the events that transpired in BW3.

Selection of the Communication: The Assigned Textbook and Cleary's Materials

Pedagogic communication includes a number of modes, from the physical environment of the classroom to modes of communication between the instructor and students (and among students), and to the course materials, activities, and assignments themselves. (See Costello, in press, for the messages sent by educational spaces.) Chapter 4 portrayed some of the typical instructional methods and activities in BW3: a predominance of lecturing by the instructor on academic and personal topics; whole class discussion or responding to exercise questions; occasional pair or group work with students; and more rarely, individual conversation between the instructor and students. Even when students worked in pairs or small groups their tasks tended to be closely controlled, for example, to answer textbook exercise questions. These methods and activities limited the in-depth participation of students in the course and almost totally blocked student-to-student communication. This pattern exemplifies Cleary's defensive teaching, which seemed to be designed to use up considerable amounts of time between lecturing on a wide range of unrelated topics, reviewing exercises in class rather than collecting them as homework to correct, and allowing class discussions to extend in far-ranging ways. Some of these strategies pleased the students, who appreciated Cleary's humor and good nature. Other activities can be ascribed to taking advantage of 'teachable moments.' In the main, however, they did little to move the course along the proposed curriculum.

In this section I focus on the course materials, which embodied the model(s) of curriculum held by the instructor and/or the division. Lead teacher Maureen Powell had chosen the textbook for BW3, *The Writer's Express*, which she had used for teaching

BW3 the previous semester. Although *The Writer's Express* is designed for basic writers at the community college, its intended audience is native rather than nonnative English speakers. As BW3 is ostensibly not an ESL course, in theory it makes sense that the ALD does not select a basic composition textbook geared toward second-language learners. By choosing such a text intended for native English speakers, the ALD maintains the distinction between its basic education courses and its ESL courses, a distinction that privileges the basic education courses as more serious and academic than the ESL courses.

In reality BW3 commonly includes a majority of nonnative speakers of English, as well as students with low educational levels, thus the ALD's choice has negative effects for ESL students. In a number of aspects the McWhorter text was less than ideal for this population.[10] For example the textbook provided no comparative analysis of the rhetorical conventions or values related to different cultures. Nor did it include a separate section for ESL students, which is an increasingly common addition to composition texts and handbooks (see, for example, the *Bedford Handbook* [Hacker, 1998] and *Keys for Writers* [Raimes, 1999]).

The Instructor's Use of the Textbook.

When Cleary began teaching BW3 he expressed interest in using the materials he was concurrently developing for native English speakers in his communications/ composition course at MTC's Airport campus. But because some BW3 students had already purchased the McWhorter text, Cleary decided to use it.[11] Week 3 of the semester was also already beyond the 10-day bookstore return period. He initially liked the book especially for the grammar summaries provided at the end of each chapter.

> It's wonderful, wonderful. I love a good textbook like this . . . mostly because again, selectivity, because you have to sort of highlight the points that you can discuss in class and go over . . . and then also at the end of each little unit, three or four pages on the basic structure . . . and they seem to be very realistic in their approach. (INT 2/9/99)

Cleary assigned two readings from the text, essays on divorce and politically correct speech. Students had mixed reactions to the readings. For instance, Ali Hasan commented that the reading, "Divorce: Sometimes a Bad Notion," was too long and difficult (FN, 2/2/99). Minji, on the other hand, had a positive impression of the readings, although mainly from using the book in the previous semester: "That is a good book, too. I enjoyed a lot. I mean, from the fall semester we read many articles from the book and we think about it and we write about the articles. . . . It's a good book, its readings [are] good and the questions [are] nice, I think" (INT 7/27/99).

The Instructor's Own Materials.

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[10] Here I am not passing judgment on the appropriateness of this text for other students, as in many ways the book seems to me quite useable. However, since ESL students have been at community colleges for decades now, the other omissions from the textbook that I have noted do seem odd.

[11] He did not make this decision himself, but consulted with Powell. My comments to Cleary that the students had passed the 10-day return limit of the bookstore may have influenced this decision as well.

But Cleary ultimately became dissatisfied with the McWhorter text. By the middle of the semester he stopped using it. One source of his dissatisfaction was its scope, not an unusual complaint for composition instructors. Cleary noted, "Unfortunately most textbooks inundate you too much and you're going to have to be very selective in your presentation. Because a textbook that you're supposed to use in a semester is normally applicable through like a two-year period, realistically. It's just overwhelming" (INT 2/9/99). More important, Cleary criticized the content of the readings, which "weren't very appetizing. They weren't good. I would say you could look through classical readings, looking at literature from the fifties, sixties, seventies, eighties, and nineties, and pull out a lot better examples" (INT 6/19/99). Currently, reading and composition textbooks tend to include excerpts or full texts from contemporary sources such as journalism, which often provide controversial topics for discussion and writing. In contrast, Cleary here noted his preference for literary selections. He seemed to equate classical literature with uncontroversial topics, as opposed to the textbook's topics such as politically correct speech, or student paper topics such as suicide.

After the semester Cleary again criticized the selection of the textbook: "If it's just a book that was intended for another type of class and is used just because there's nothing else there, then I think what we'd better do is sort of gather together different sources" (INT 6/19/99). Cleary's experience in BW3 with an ill-fitting textbook recalled his previous experiences in not feeling supported by the text. For these reasons, he had begun to develop materials:

> I wrote my own workbook because it was more focused on the class I'm actually teaching, on the student level. . . . Mine is more focused on short lessons, which are more . . . very achievable, and more proved to be very successful. I've field tested it for the last year. 'Cuz I wrote as I went. And I've taught it twice already, and this'll be the third time. And about the fourth time, then it'll be just about the final product. (INT 6/19/99)

He distributed copies of these materials in BW3. On the one hand, Cleary's use of his own materials can be viewed as his assertion of agency as a college-level instructor. In contrast to the restrictions often placed on schoolteachers (Apple, 1986) a distinctive feature of college teaching is the instructor's freedom to choose teaching materials. Thus a lack of direction from administrators can be desirable, indeed is often assumed, as it affords the possibility for instructors' self-determination in the classroom. On the other hand, Cleary's desire to use his own materials in BW3 may have signaled his ignorance of the differences between the needs of the predominantly nonnative speakers of English at the Airport campus and those of his ESL composition students.

Cleary's materials were not much more appropriate than was McWhorter for BW3. He had primarily created grammar exercises with fill-in-the blank or isolated sentence construction activities. In addition the content of many of the exercises was unfamiliar to the BW3 students, rendering the materials more difficult than necessary. Students often stumbled over vocabulary as they attempted to do the exercises. For

example, the Hasans' unfamiliarity with surfing and playing in the snow prevented their understanding of the words 'surfboard' and 'snowdrift' (FN 4/29/99). Their questions about these words shifted the focus of the lesson from the grammar under study to the vocabulary. One exercise on adjectives in apposition confused the Hasans. In this example, the meaning of 'play' and the significance of the underlining of the title posed problems: "Hamlet seems to come to life. It is Shakespeare's best play" (FN 4/29/99). Students had difficulty distinguishing between the 'play' used as a noun rather than a verb. They were also unfamiliar with Shakespeare and with the convention of underlining titles. Naturally, students at any level encounter new vocabulary while they are learning English. These cases simply demonstrate how materials that are not designed for English language learners may hinder students' learning.

In sum neither the McWhorter text nor Cleary's materials supported students well in learning academic literacy. Although aspects of these texts may be inappropriate, the ways that Cleary employed these materials also contributes to my characterization of the framing in BW3 as strong. The materials supplemented Cleary's lectures but did not give students the opportunity to practice new structures or concepts in a meaningful context. Thus when students did grammar activities they were not related to the texts that the students were writing. Likewise, although students had some opportunities to choose the topics or modes of their writing, in particular for the research paper, they lacked the sense that individual assignments were building to a particular goal. As Cleary's feedback tended to focus on surface-level mistakes and formatting problems there was little engagement between the instructor and students with the content of student writing. His comments did not relate small grammatical and usage points to the development of students' purposes in writing. Instructional choices such as these largely prevented students from engaging with the assigned texts to develop their writing abilities.

Sequencing and Pacing of the Communication

In addition to the selection of communication, framing depends on sequencing and pacing, the rate at which the learner is expected to acquire the material being taught. In his second week Cleary passed out a detailed syllabus (Appendix C) that covered half the semester. It listed the course objectives:

> You will learn: to write clear, concise sentences; compose unified coherent, well-developed paragraphs with sharply focused topic sentences; gather, evaluate and present relevant information; create oral and written article summaries; work effectively in small groups; communicate your ideas and discoveries to the entire class.

> You will use computers to find printed, Internet, on-line, and CD-ROM sources for professional and personal ends, and to generate and receive materials pertinent to class projects.

His initial timetable on the syllabus was ambitious, not accounting for class periods spent in the computer lab, the slower pace of a second-language class, or the fact that students rarely completed assigned homework The schedule was perhaps modeled on Cleary's experience with native English speakers in the Arts and Sciences Division or on an ideal version of what should occur. As the first two months passed Cleary covered most of the curricular content roughly according to the order of the syllabus. Although his syllabus specified textbook exercises for homework, Cleary soon stopped asking students to do such homework, possibly because few of them actually completed the exercises at home. Different types of students in fact complained about having to do homework, from Boris, who was retired, to Minji, who had two young daughters at home. When Cleary later handed out the syllabus that covered the remainder of the semester no textbook readings were included as homework.

Most of the brief writing assignments on the syllabus were assigned and covered in class, with the exceptions of comparison and contrast, cause and effect, and classification texts. In mid-semester Cleary assigned the research paper, three to five pages in length. On March 9 he provided a handout, "Writing a Research Paper," photocopied from a McGraw-Hill textbook.[12] Like the McWhorter book, this 26-page document appeared to be written for native English speakers. It included information about selecting and researching a topic, organizing information, writing the paper and documenting the sources. Cleary did not cover this handout in class, however, leaving students to deal with it on their own.

The existence of a syllabus in a course such as BW3 is itself of interest. For one thing, it supports the cultural model of what a college course is, in contrast to adult education classes that may not have a predefined amount of "content" to cover. By determining assignments and due dates in advance, a syllabus presupposes that students share similar abilities to do the coursework (and homework) and therefore that the course will not be unduly sidetracked with "remedial" work. Likewise a syllabus represents elements of for-credit courses, as do examinations. It also assumes that students have the time and physical space to do homework. With adult students, however, the pressures of work and family call this assumption into question. Minji, for example, although not working outside the home, noted her appreciation for Maureen Powell's having given students time to do their writing in class (INT 7/27/99). In BW3 the variety of student purposes also lessened the effectiveness of the syllabus, in that the retirees in particular were not always interested in doing homework, and other students had problems finding the time or space to do it. Finally, in this case, the syllabus represented Cleary's transmissive concept of education in which he heavily controlled the selection, amount, and pacing of the material to be covered in class. Such an approach underutilizes

[12] Cleary did not provide the bibliographic information on this text.

students' life experiences, interests, and goals in creating a curriculum in use. In an environment of such strong framing students have little input or control over how they learn. This approach contributed to the boredom the students felt during classes and the irrelevance they saw between the course and their lives.

Criteria for the Communication: Student Texts and the Instructor's Response

Important aspects of the composition curriculum are the types of writing assigned to students and the instructor's responses to their texts. Bernstein notes,

> In any teaching relation, the essence of the relation is to evaluate the competence of the acquirer. What you are evaluating is whether the criteria that have been made available to the acquirer have been achieved—whether they are regulative criteria about conduct, character, and manner, or instructional, discursive criteria: how to produce an acceptable piece of writing or speech. (1990, p. 66)

Cleary assigned regular writing tasks but he did not provide students with written instructions for the assignments. Thus he conveyed his criteria orally, leading to confusion and incomplete assignments. By not making his criteria explicit Cleary relied on the knowledge of academic discourse conventions that some students already possessed, but that many did not.

Cleary's writing assignments were intentionally kept short, partly to reduce his (uncompensated) grading time and partly because of his teaching philosophy. Limiting the length of assignments to a paragraph or two assured that longer issues of structure and the development of complex arguments were not handled. Students were given some freedom to choose what to write about. Cleary often supplied the students with paper topics defined by rhetorical function such as "dynamic descriptions" or by content prompts such as "a childhood remembrance" (FN 2/23). Some, like an assignment to write a recipe, were atypical of a college composition course.

Prompted in these ways the students sometimes produced creative texts like "Dancing with a Thousand People," a dynamic description about a folk ball written by Atsuko, a Japanese woman. But these personal texts were not developed into academic writing. The next section examines in more detail the student texts that I collected from Cleary to learn how students carried out the assignments and how he responded.

Student Texts and the Instructor's Responses.

This section shows Cleary's criteria in action, as he did not provide explicit descriptions of his criteria. It explores two main issues related to the writing students did in BW3. First, these examples show how the instructor's choices of assignments limited the potential for students to do academic writing. Second, they demonstrate how the instructor's responses to student texts did little to develop students' academic writing. As a result students were inadequately prepared for college-level work. Apart from the research paper, students were generally instructed to write one or two paragraphs, and Cleary publicly commented to individual students whose papers were too long.

The dynamic description assignment resulted in Atsuko's paragraph on the folk ball mentioned above, and one-paragraph papers including "My first date" and "First

Time Sledding." Each text received comments on the formatting of the paper, grammatical corrections, and indications to capitalize certain words. Cleary included a coded comment, "R-S," on one paper, which I suppose meant "run-on sentence." He commented, "good story," and "nice description" on these papers. In Rana's paper entitled, "My Country," she seemed to have incorporated the superficial corrections that Cleary made on an earlier draft (which I do not have). Yet the paper includes some unusual phrasings that Cleary did not comment on, such as the opening sentences: "Palestine and Abu-Dhabi are my home towns. I have two countries." Rana ends the essay by saying, "There are lots of date palms that you can see between the buildings that are used for illustration," but it is unclear where this final phrase originated or what its referent is.

In response to the assignment to write a synopsis of the article, "Divorce: Sometimes a Bad Notion," Saky's paper simply used the article title as the paper title. That every line on his typed paper began with a capital letter indicated that Saky did not understand the wraparound function of the word processor, but Cleary only put a slash through those capital letters to indicate lower case, rather than explain the reasons. He sometimes changed Saky's diction: from "Marriage can be bad for person" to "Marriage can be destructive for a person," for example. Although Saky's summary omitted many key ideas in the original article, Cleary commented, "nice summary," and graded content and format as 9/9 (of a possible 10). Leila and Rana Hasan both titled their summaries simply, "Divorce." In their corrected papers they had removed most of the grammatical problems, but issues of appropriate diction remained. For example, Leila ended by saying, "Divorce is not a good way to get rid of your spouse." Rana wrote, "Lots of people use divorce as a way to get rid of the spouse if they are not happy or find it difficult to continue with the marriage, but that will reflect on their children." Because Cleary had not given them guidelines for summarizing these students were left to draw on what they had learned in previous courses, as did Leila and Rana, or on their intuition, in Saky's case.

Concurrent with a lack of feedback on the content of students' writing there often came high praise. For an assignment to describe students' native languages, three of the four papers earned a grade of 10/10, a comment of "excellent," and a gold star; the other was an ungraded revision with no comments. Minji's paper on the Korean language was in some ways flawed despite Cleary's praise. It opened with an overly general description, "Korea is in the eastern Asia. The southern half of the Korean peninsula is bordering the Yellow Sea and East Sea next to Japan." The information she supplied here was not subsequently tied to the points she makes about the Korean language. Instead, she notes that, 'The Korean language belongs to the Ural-Altaic language group of central Asia. This group of languages includes Turkish, Mongolian, Hungarian, and Finnish." Assuming she had looked up this information, Minji also neglected to include her sources of information for this paper; in her defense, research and citation had not been part of the assignment. It is important to note that I make these evaluations not to criticize the students, whose work I would not expect to be perfect, but to demonstrate the effects of unchallenging assignments, inadequate explanations of the instructor's criteria,

and lack of feedback. In this example a grade of 10/10 and a comment of "excellent" do not challenge Minji to develop as an academic writer.

The two research papers in my possession further illustrate Cleary's kind of feedback. One, "About the History and Geography of New Mexico," was written by Olga Dubinsky, one of the retired Russians, who had an M.D./Ph.D. Olga introduced her three-page paper with personal reasons for choosing the topic, that she and her husband love to travel. In three pages Cleary made only two substantive comments, that "usually research papers are more impersonal, and do not use I." Yet he had not previously discussed tone or authorial stance in class. And at the end of each paragraph in which Olga included facts about geography and history, Cleary wrote, "(source)" to indicate the need to credit her facts to another author. Apart from that he made a few grammatical and lexical changes and told Olga to put her reference list on a separate page. His second comment was simply, "Use references within your text (see handout)." Olga's grade was 7/8, but other than these two comments it was not clear why Cleary deemed it deficient. It is conceivable that Cleary generated minimal feedback knowing that Olga was retired and that she was about to leave the class for vacation.

Minji's four-page research paper, "Effective Teaching of Musical Instruments for Preschoolers," was preceded by a separate page containing her thesis and an outline. In the first draft she had included references but omitted page numbers. Cleary made a few surface-level corrections and commented on the first draft, "Your paper was expertly done and very interesting to read." On the second draft, for which Minji had supplied reference page numbers and made Cleary's corrections, he wrote, "This is excellent! Readable, interesting, and instructive," and graded the paper as 10/10. Nonetheless, though Minji's research paper was well researched, it again had problems that would have been poorly evaluated in a first-year college composition course. Her introduction was weak and unsubstantiated: "More and more parents than ever before are encouraging their children to play musical instruments. Unfortunately, the encouragement is frequently in the form of a command instead of an inquiry. Too many parents want their children to play instruments." As the text progressed she switched from an impersonal third-person stance to an instructional stance from which she directs parents, "Help your child be curious about sound and find opportunities to play with sound as you would make with any other enrichment tool (Edwin)." It is not clear whether she is paraphrasing or plagiarizing from the sources she found. In addition she had organized the paper in a sort of question and answer format based on the sections of her outline, rather than converting the questions into statements. Minji's paper was a good beginning for a research paper, but apart from making Cleary's corrections little revision was evident in the drafts she gave him. There was no sign of her revisiting ideas or revising her writing. These deficiencies are not the fault of Minji but of the shortcomings of the course.

In summary Cleary's feedback emphasized formatting rather than the purpose, argument, content, structure, or tone. As he had not provided students with overt criteria he rarely evaluated their work accordingly. He mainly paid attention to surface-level errors instead of responding to students' meaning, asking them to "correct" papers rather than "revise" them, thus reinforcing the focus on superficial errors in grammar and

spelling. Indeed I never observed him discussing the concept of revising as against correcting. As a result students lacked the opportunity for reflection on the purpose and content of their work that more searching comments would prompt. They likewise were not challenged to examine issues of stance, voice, and structure. Although in the research papers students were able to choose their own topics and base their research on issues of interest to them, Cleary did not take this opportunity to extend students' rhetorical abilities. And not all students were equipped to choose appropriate topics that would allow them to develop their thinking and writing abilities. Rana Hasan, for example, chose "the planets" as her research topic; Cleary simply asked her to narrow her paper to discuss one of the planets rather than all. Teaching writing with a focus on form over function gives short shrift to issues of communication and the purposes of writing (see Harris, 1997). When students cannot envision a clear purpose or a specific audience for their texts their writing carries little intrinsic meaning for them. Students' understandings of how rhetorical devices help to shape a text are likewise underdeveloped in decontextualized writing situations.

To some extent the writing activities that I have analyzed in this section are the result of Cleary's teaching philosophy. Nonetheless, some of his responses to student writing can also be attributed to his shortage of time as a part-time instructor as well as to defensive teaching. Faced with a choice of providing limited assignments that were easy to evaluate in terms of time and effort or establishing a framework to challenge students' thinking and writing abilities, Cleary chose the former route. In a class with such a high dropout rate he may have been afraid of offending students or demanding too much from them and seeing more of them leave the course.

The Instructor's Teaching Philosophy.

Cleary's teaching philosophy predicted a certain mode of control which I have categorized a strong framing. As it was enacted the BW3 curriculum emphasized English grammar, pronunciation, and isolated writing skills rather than essayist literacy. Cleary's valuing of the product approach to composition may be connected to his own social class position as well as the higher status of teaching literature compared with teaching composition and ESL. Cleary believed that if a student "conform[s] to a certain model in English, . . . that transition will be almost automatic. . . . The best way to learn writing is just a classical simple, simple model. Read good examples and imitate those examples, and do a variety of writing practices." By having students imitate "good" examples rather than create their own texts for their own purposes, Cleary's model retains power in his own hands of the instructor. (Interestingly, despite espousing this product model, his actual instructional methods were much more flexible.)

Discussing the course materials he was developing Cleary called it "a wonderful hobby. I get to sit down and page through Shakespeare and look for things, elements that would be applicable to certain styles of writing" (INT 2/9/99). In response to a request for a book list from Petra, one of the younger Russian women, Cleary characterized the authors he had listed—Hemingway, Orwell, London, Steinbeck, Twain, Crane, Vonnegut—as easy to read and "very pleasant" (FN 2/11/99). Here his commitment to classical literature seems disconnected from the needs of ESL students. (Cleary did not

assign this reading list, but created it for Petra; thus its circumscribed nature is curious.) Certainly some students with high English levels, perhaps including Petra, enjoy canonical writers such as these, but the limited scope of the reading list may reflect Cleary's personal interest in English literature more than his understanding of the students. More importantly it reflects an outdated understanding of how readers respond to others' texts and in the process create their own texts.

Control over the Social Base: The Enacted Curriculum

My discussion of the hidden curriculum of BW3 in Chapter 7 elaborates the notion of control over the social base more fully. For the moment, suffice it to say that Cleary's reliance on grammar exercises, his teacher-centered mode of instruction, and the traditional physical set-up of the classroom with chairs and desks in front-facing rows, created a pedagogy that, although perhaps familiar and comfortable to students, did not foster learning to write academically. I argue that forms of Cleary's control of the classroom and its activities resulted from his teaching philosophy. By contrast, a student-centered methodology has the potential for instructor and students to share classroom authority when the pedagogy is based on students' experiences, needs, and goals.

Bernstein claims that "Where framing is strong," as I have argued it is here, "the transmitter has explicit control over the selection, sequence, pacing, criteria, and the social base" (1996, p. 27). Ironically, exerting this kind of control can have the result of shifting the final responsibility for learning from the instructor to the students. That is, if the instructor controls all aspects of the classroom experience and the students still do not learn the curriculum it is easier to lay the blame on the students. Indeed, in response to my interview question about "where most of these students are headed in terms of the kind of writing they're going to need to do after this class?," Cleary replied, "They're going to have to do a lot of hard work for a long period of time. Most of these students are pretty elementary" (INT 2/9/99), despite being enrolled in the highest level writing course in the ALD. He noted that teaching adult ESL students was "sort of an endless battle. And they need a lot of work. A tremendous amount of work." Once again, this characterization ignores the experiences and backgrounds of the students themselves. In fact, not all of these students needed "a tremendous amount of work," as Chapter 8 reports.

Cleary's methodology perhaps results from the fact that after ten years in Mexico he was not current with ESL composition pedagogy. Nor had MTC provided him with even cursory training in current composition methods. His lack of training and supervision reflected the structural conditions of the ALD; as a result it communicated to students not to expect the most current pedagogy and methods in this free course. At the same time the enacted curriculum accorded with administrative structures and demands. "Defensive teaching" such as Cleary's can result from a complicated mixture of factors. "Even well-trained teachers are often unable to teach ideally in the face of the organizational systems controlling their workplace" (McNeil, 1986, p.161). In this study the organizational system can be seen not so much as controlling the daily operations of Cleary's workplace as restricting the possibilities for his course by insufficiently

supporting him. Like Cleary, the high school teachers that McNeil studied "felt that neither the support nor the financial reward was commensurate with the out-of-class time needed to preparing learning activities adequately, or to read and comment on the student essay tests or written assignments" (1986, p.176). Quite reasonably, Cleary's comment about receiving the minimum wage for his work agrees with this attitude.

Because of the instructor's background and the institutional construction of ESL students the course became a hybrid between an ESL grammar course and an English composition course. The curriculum was not related to students' cultural backgrounds, nor did it examine genres of writing or relate the writing in this course to future academic or other writing tasks. In addition, the absence from the curriculum of discussions of genres and rhetorical differences helped to construct ESL students as a homogeneous population, without distinguishable identities, histories, and goals. A curriculum that engaged in such contrastive analysis would likely have unearthed a variety of student backgrounds and experiences—certainly in the semester under study. Ironically, such an approach would have enhanced students' understanding of the variability of textual genres, audience, and purpose. Instead the academic expectations for students were reduced.

The Pedagogic Device in BW3

Wong and Apple explain, "the idea of the pedagogic device directs us both to anatomize the specific rules, practices, and social relations regulating pedagogic transmission and to examine their effects on the production and reproduction of consciousness in schools" (in press). As noted, the pedagogic device comprises distributive, recontextualizing, and evaluative rules.

Distributive Rules and ESL Basic Writing.

Within the pedagogic device "the function of distributive rules is to regulate the relationship between power, social groups, forms of consciousness and practice. *Distributive rules specialize forms of knowledge, forms of consciousness and forms of practice to social groups*" (Bernstein, 1996, p. 42, emphasis added). The forms of knowledge that were emphasized in BW3 mixed the isolated elements of English grammar with decontextualized aspects of composition. The distributive rules thereby limited the possible forms of knowledge, consciousness, and practice available to students. An atomistic focus on the production of correct English grammar reinforces a deficit model of education with nonnative English speakers. Instead of focusing on "the discovery of competence"[13] (Kutz, Groden, and Zamel 1993), this approach highlights the bits and pieces that may be absent from students' working knowledge. This is not to say that students should not be taught English grammar but to propose that they learn it for the specific uses in the process of authentic communication. Similarly, although breaking down the writing process makes it more manageable for students to learn to write, the BW3 curriculum rarely completed the circle by building to whole pieces of

[13] See Bernstein (1996, Ch. 3) for a discussion contrasting pedagogic models of performance and competence that is interesting not only as an example of recontextualizing but also for the limitations of liberal-seeming competence models (see also Delpit, 1995).

writing. Moreover, the lack of real revision of their essays removed the opportunity for students to understand the writing process as involving continual refinement of meaning as well as attention to surface-level errors. The absence of contrastive analysis of cultural forms of rhetoric and composition likewise shifted the focus from a competence model to a deficit model. It further taught students what they should acquire without considering the ways in which that process might require them to sacrifice aspects of their cultural forms.

A grammar focus reinforces the power differential between the expert English-speaking instructor[14] and students acquiring English. Although the professor-student relationship typically involves a power differential partially based on the unequal accumulation of knowledge, the magnitude of these differences in language learning is particularly salient here. Language learners living in a second language environment not only have the continual need to use the language they are studying but also are thereby constantly reminded of their linguistic inadequacies. The reinforcing of this power structure can lead to students holding the attitude, as Saky told me, that he was stupid (FN 1/26/99). In this way some of the students themselves, but also instructors and administrators develop forms of consciousness rooted in the deficit model. It is important to remember, however, that these rules are not unilaterally imposed by the instructor or accepted by all students. Some students, despite circumstances such as those in BW3, do succeed in thinking the unthinkable for themselves, finding, in Bernstein's terms, "a potential discursive gap . . . a site for alternative possibilities" (1996, p. 44) in which to conceive and realize their own objectives.

Recontextualizing Rules.

The recontextualizing principle "selectively appropriates, relocates, refocuses and relates other discourses to constitute its own order" (Bernstein, 1996, p. 47). The first challenge here is to determine what constitutes the "primary context" of writing (in any language). Bernstein defines the primary context as "the process whereby 'new' ideas are selectively created, modified, and changed and where specialized discourses are developed, modified, or changed" (1990, p. 191). Unlike the natural sciences or technical fields, which are generally the preserve of specialists with clearly defined borders between their work and that of undergraduates, writing as a tool of communication spans a broader range of users—academic and not. It is not analogous simply to say that the writing of professional writers is the primary context, since professional writing includes a wide range of genres, purposes, and contexts. Leaving aside the question of what the primary context for college composition would be, it is clearer that first-year composition becomes the "secondary context" for basic writing, with its "selective reproduction of educational discourse" (ibid.). First-year composition in some ways recontextualizes academic discourse in that novice student writers often imitate and approximate forms of academic literacy that may or may not have authentic aspects. However, if we view basic writing as a greatly recontextualized form of academic and/or authentic writing, then for ESL students augmenting the basic writing curriculum with elements of English grammar further removes them from authentic purposes and methods for their writing. It also

[14] An expert English speaker does not necessarily have to be a native speaker of English.

distances them from the possibility of joining the community of practice of college-level writers and other kinds of writing communities.

Examples of this recontextualizing principle are found in BW3 not only in terms of the hybrid nature of the course as an ESL and composition course but also in terms of how the course conceives of writing. For example, the McWhorter text is subtitled: "A Paragraph and Essay Text with Readings." By dissecting holistic conceptions of essayist literacy into the component parts of paragraphs and sentences the text recontextualizes authentic written communication into discrete elements—leading to a skills approach to writing that leaves students unpracticed in integrating what they learn. The Hasans noted this deficiency in discussing what they still needed to learn in preparation for first-year composition at the university. Leila commented, "I need the discussion about how to write the essay. He discussed that but I don't feel like I still got it, you know. So we need more practicing in that, I think. . . . He discussed all that in sentences, but you know in essays or writ[ing] it will be different" (INT 4/26/99). Rana wanted more discussion of how to use punctuation marks, "cuz we don't know where to put them, all of them" (INT 4/26/99). Here students demonstrate their developing awareness of what academic writing requires and the distance between those requirements and the BW3 curriculum.

The construction of ESL basic writers and their future needs may play a role in the naturalization of such recontextualizing by the instructor and administrators. The range of students and their educational and occupational goals complicates the simple image that the instructor and administrators hold of the students. The potentially broad scope of a writing curriculum necessitates choosing a focus; when the majority of students are not identified as preparing for college-level work it is not surprising that the curriculum is not geared to challenge students at that level. Here the outside world also impinges on the selection process; when students are envisioned as doing or preparing to do some types of work rather than others, the curriculum is affected. In BW3, this vision resulted in a curriculum that limited rather than expanded possibilities for students. This tendency can be illustrated by contrasting a typical workplace education ESL curriculum, in which, for example, students memorize lists of work-related terms, to an (ideal) college composition course that asks students to create meaningful forms of expression (Boyle, 1999).

The rules of evaluation regulate the production of academic knowledge according to the demands of both the instructional discourse of the particular context and of the dominant regulative discourse. In the case of BW3 the absence of grading as a tool of control for the instructor, compounded by a lack of a clear sense of direction for the students in the course, left Cleary wielding neither carrot nor stick. Despite his careful split grading scheme that separately evaluated the content and format of student writing,

the numeric grades he assigned had no institutional meaning, although he did not learn this until late in the term. On the last day of the term Cleary also learned that BW3 was noncredit, which he noted was "a real letdown," since it created "a big problem in a course like that as far as getting students to follow through." Because students did not earn credit the grades that Cleary carefully assigned to their homework were ultimately meaningless. Likewise the ALD's internal grading system seemed to serve the purposes of reporting student outcomes to grant funders more than anything else. Because it has no transferability to other divisions of the college it was pointless. This system divorces the basic education courses from the institutional structures that can lead students to take for-credit courses in other divisions.

Although the instructor and administrators disagreed about whether the absence of grades affected students' motivation, the fact remains that in Cleary's conception of teaching writing grades did carry weight. In a basic education setting colleges refuse to reward effort made for "remedial" work in order to avoid downgrading the curriculum and thereby blurring the institution's status and separation from secondary schools. As a result students must be motivated for reasons other than grades. The absence of grades does not preclude the meaningful evaluation of student work, however. With high student motivation and useful feedback from the instructor students can learn from formative instead of summative evaluations. Ultimately the BW3 students were or would be evaluated in other arenas and in other ways. Students interested in graduate programs would need to take various standardized tests. Ahmad would need to pass the GED; Saky, Minji, and the Hasans would need to take first-year composition. Additionally, according to Maureen Powell, the MTC writing test is based on grammar, not essayist literacy. Despite my critique of the BW3 curriculum in terms of preparing students for academic discourse, for students continuing on at MTC, it therefore may have a certain benefit.

These components of the pedagogic device suggest that the distinction between the overt and the hidden curricula is far from clear. Plainly, however, the failings of the overt curriculum contributed to the high dropout rate and overall dissatisfaction of the students. Chapter 7 examines how the hidden curriculum worked in BW3.

## CHAPTER 7: THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM OF BASIC WRITING 3

In contrast to the overt curriculum, the hidden curriculum (Jackson, 1968) comprises the multiple lessons related to the socialization of students and their

preparation to take part in the workings of the capitalist economy. In response to the overly deterministic nature of early correspondence theories and reproduction models, the concept of the hidden curriculum has generally fallen into disfavor (Apple, 1995a). But work by Auerbach and Burgess (1985), Margolis and Romero (1998), and Margolis (in press) points to the continuing usefulness of this idea to uncover "the tacit teaching to students of norms, values, and dispositions that goes on simply by their living in and coping with the institutional expectations and routines of schools day in and day out" (Apple, 1990, p.14). No matter which specific hidden curriculum may be uncovered in a particular location at a given time, the necessity for such analysis continues (Martin, 1976). The hidden curriculum "seems to operate within each setting in some systematic and nearly unfailing manner" (Vallance, 1980, p. 147). Theories of resistance (Everhart, 1983; Giroux, 1983; McNeil, 1986) and manifestations of agency by students and workers (Apple, 1995a) have counterbalanced the shortcomings of the strict reproduction model. The lived experiences of students and teachers in real institutions emerge as more complex—and in some ways, more hopeful—than structural models capture.

In BW3 the hidden curriculum worked on the multiple levels of the institution, the classroom, and the economy. On the institutional level historical tensions among the competing goals of two-year colleges often come to the fore in ESL programs, which serve the widest range of students and often cannot restrict entry into their programs. At the same time, with the increasing casualization of academic labor, community colleges hire more part-time faculty, which shortchanges students of needed services and reduces faculty involvement and control over the selection and implementation of the curriculum. The crisis in educational funding produces greater need for institutions to compete for government grants to support instruction, especially in service areas such as English language and literacy. This competition has curricular and policy implications including the threat of privatization, the direction in which basic education programs in New York are moving (Arenson, 2000). Privatization reinforces the artificial distinction between 'academic' or 'content' courses and service courses such as composition that is already established in the separation of 'remedial' programs from for-credit programs. Even before privatization might be implemented, however, at MTC the ESL students themselves became a commodity. These students embodied the diversity that the institution actively sought to display, enabling the ALD to provide MTC with greater minority enrollment numbers.

At the classroom level ESL students confronted a well-recognized hidden curriculum of low-expectations, docility, and the internalization of failure (Morrow and Torres, 1998). Below I list the elements of the hidden curriculum in BW3. Students were also seen as a monolithic group with few individual differences in past histories and future goals. At the economic level, in this era of privatization and global capitalism,

students were taught to become accustomed to reductions in the social services such as schools, libraries, and welfare support (Apple, 1996; Gee, Hull, and Lankshear, 1996). For much of the twentieth century, when the United States was considered a welfare state (in a positive sense), the provision of public services characterized the nation—in many cases, even for immigrants, whether documented or not. Now, however, as the putative logic of privatization reduces public services, the gap widens between those who can afford to purchase such services and those who must suffer from their removal. Gewirtz, Ball, and Bowe comment on this trend:

> The market solution represents a paradigm shift in the economics of educational policy and indeed of social policy generally. It also carries with it a weighty political agenda: first, the deconstruction of the principles of collective responsibility embedded, however weekly, in the welfare state after the Second World War; second, the replacement of professional control with managerial control; and third, the diminution of the roles and powers of the local state and the concomitant diminution of local democracy. (1995, p. 2)

Nonetheless many ESL and adult basic education courses are still funded by federal and state grants that allow programs to offer courses gratis. Apple (1996, p. 88) noted the government's need for legitimacy in the face of economic policies that foster the shift of manufacturing jobs to offshore locations. It is not surprising therefore, that after the 1993 passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the federal government funded courses through the Economic Dislocation and Worker Adjustment Assistance Act designed to retrain workers who had lost their jobs to Mexico (Merrifield, 1997, p. 274). In fact, federal funding for adult basic education increased

twelve-fold between 1965 and 1997 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1997), as the economy underwent a fundamental shift from a manufacturing to a service base.

Nonetheless, to students the ironic message of free courses becomes that if something is free it must have little worth. The hidden curriculum on these three levels sends the message that in the United States, "You get what you pay for." This message accords with Bernstein's claim that "If we look at the knowledge the school transmits we shall find that it is based on a distributive principle such that different knowledges and their possibilities are differentially distributed to different social groups" (1996, p. 8).

## The Hidden Curriculum and Forms of Capital

Martin (1976) points out that the hidden curriculum is experienced individually; particular students receive different messages from and respond differently to the curriculum. The variety of BW3 students underscores this claim; their experiences demonstrate how the process works. Bourdieu's (1990, 1998) concept of economic, cultural, and symbolic capital helps us to examine the process by which the hidden curriculum reaches students in an individualized manner. Looking at the ways in which players on the educational field embody these forms of capital gives a subtle and complex understanding of how students and teachers grapple with both overt and hidden curricula. Students embody the 'investments' of economic and cultural capital that have been made in them by themselves, their families, and their societies. The accumulated layers of experience that these investments have created help determine students' responses to the educational experiences they encounter in the classroom and in the institution.

The Hidden Curriculum at the Institutional Level

The course instructor plays a pivotal role in creating and implementing both overt and hidden curricula. Instructors are institutional actors endowed with pedagogic authority (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990, p. 20). But George Cleary taught three different courses at three different locations of MTC and worked about 20 hours per week as a medical interpreter. Thus one structural form of the hidden curriculum, the hiring of part-time instructors, means that free courses may not offer the services associated with for-credit courses that charge tuition: time for the instructor to respond to student work outside of class; office hours, office space, and the like. Colleges thus communicate that students in some courses or programs cannot count on having well-trained full-time faculty who are invested in the institution and knowledgeable about its systems. Cleary's case illustrates some of the problems with this practice.

Cleary suffered from institutional policies and practices that put him in the classroom three weeks into the semester because of problems scheduling the first instructor. Being hired late deprived him of time to prepare for the course and learn ALD procedures. During the semester Cleary received virtually no support or direction. Other than a textbook and course objectives, he was given no previous syllabi or materials, although the policy requires keeping such materials on file. Furthermore, even though Maureen Powell was assigned as his mentor, a policy that the ALD implements to maintain certification, they never met. (See Margolis and Romero, in press, on mentoring.)

Cleary was left in the dark about many key issues. For example, he was not told to administer the COMPASS writing post-test to his students at the end of the term. Another ALD employee had administered the pre-test in February, but Cleary had not been involved in that process. Only on the last day of the semester did he learn about reporting requirements for grant and college record keeping. Cleary was supposed to follow up with students when they missed class and record it on the computer system if they had dropped the class. "Client reporting" data for funders requested detailed knowledge of not only students' academic competencies but also of personal information, such as whether they were U.S. citizens and registered voters. Part-time instructors rarely have access to such personal information, nor may they wish to have it. Given the political climate in states such as California, where teachers have been expected to inform on undocumented immigrant students in their classes, instructors may not wish to act as surveillance agents of the state.

On a mundane level, Cleary was not given an office in the ALD, so he had nowhere to store materials or read student papers in private. He did not have keys that would let him into the computer lab or classrooms, so he was occasionally locked out and forced to search for someone to open rooms for him. Nor did the ALD assume that Cleary would meet with students outside of class. In addition lead teacher Maureen Powell had informed part-time instructors that they were not required to attend department or faculty meetings. The labor union contract specifies that mandatory meetings and student conferences must be paid; by releasing part-time instructors the ALD saved money but increased the isolation of instructors and kept them ignorant of

institutional policies, procedures, and issues. These problems alienated Cleary from the ALD administration and his students. As a result of these conditions and the high dropout rate Cleary characterized the semester as unsuccessful. "The class was not a success. . . . If you're going to be honest about it and measure it accurately, it wasn't." He identified as reasons "daily pressures" on students, the course's lack of clear expectations for students, and dearth of institutional support. Yet

> the major problem that anybody in my situation is going to come into is that you're being a part-time instructor, you're going to be in off the street to give your class, and you're going to be gone. That's the fallacy in doing the part-time instructor. I think that's a very difficult role to play . . . because there's no feedback, [or] making contact with people in the department. (INT 6/19/99)

In his view a key factor was that ALD courses were free. Cleary believed that students would be more attentive and responsible if they had to pay. "If you're giving something for free, it's worthless. People don't appreciate when things are given away for free." Charging students for courses "creates a commitment" like buying a textbook as "an investment." This view does not take into account student's life situations and motives for taking the course, however. While paying might make students feel more committed to the course, and therefore attend more consistently and complete their homework, unless they have specific instrumental motives, their investment in these aspects of the course might decline despite having paid for it. Cleary commented to students about the $38 textbook: "It's an expensive textbook. But education is expensive." Here the instructor—not necessarily consciously— promulgated the hidden curriculum of the privatization of education.

Cleary's comments raise the issue of student expectations, using a consumer model. He stated, "You pay more money for something and you expect a better product and you're more proud of what you've done." In discussing his private language academy in Acapulco Cleary used the discourse of consumerism and contemporary business practices (Gee, Hull, and Lankshear, 1996):

> The philosophy at our school, when we train teachers, is that the student is your boss, really. You must satisfy the student, for everything ordinary. . . . You're there to serve the student and you must have results. And to do that you focus on strategies that are efficient, straightforward, so sort of the Japanese model, keep it simple and keep it functional. (INT 2/9/99)

At MTC, however, it is not solely the instructor's responsibility to get such "results." On paper the ALD provides student services to support classroom teaching. According to dean Ricardo Garcia students are supposed to develop Personal Education Plans (PEP), a "road map" for their academic futures. Both full- and part-time faculty help students create PEPs, yet part-time instructors are not compensated for the extra work. Likewise, the ALD's Transition Committee helps students who are planning to transfer into academic or vocational programs. It relies on instructors to identify likely candidates for the program. But because of the haphazard way that these services are implemented no PEPs were developed for students in BW3,[15] nor were students directed to the Transition Committee. As a part-time instructor Cleary received little support, yet found the ALD placing high expectations that he would be a conduit to student services. Garcia noted his preference for hiring part-timers, which, though requiring more paperwork, allows the ALD "flexibility" in securing workplace education contracts (INT

10/22/99) as well as benefits such as savings on salaries, benefits, and the cost of long-term employees; and a greater concentration of decision-making power in the hands of administrators.

The Commodification of Students

Institutional factors constitute one part of the hidden curriculum—that non-paying students may receive a lower quality education. Also of interest is the role that the physical bodies of ESL students played in institutional politics related to minority students. Garcia highlighted the importance of good minority enrollment figures. "What we've been trying to get [the other college division administrators] to see is that when you need students, you can get them from us. . . . When you need to improve your retention numbers, guess who can do that." Although MTC does not keep statistics on ALD student retention, Garcia claimed that ESL students are "the most consistent attenders. . . . They come back the most."[16] High retention rates help secure and retain grant funds. Perhaps this is why, although Garcia claimed that, "[I]t is not the intention of the program" to serve international students, about one-third of the students in BW3 were related to students or staff at the state university (INT 10/22/99). The cultural capital that such students possess enables them to skirt the rules that exclude them from free courses at MTC. At the same time the ALD benefits from their presence in increasing the number of students in its ESL courses. Presumably these students also move through the five

[15] Lack of PEPs may be detrimental, but since the "cooling out" function often occurs through counselors and other agents attempting to reduce students' aspirations, such services can also have deleterious effects.

levels of ESL and into basic education or credit courses more quickly than do less-educated students.

*Discourses of Diversity*

The concern with diversity that MTC shares with many institutions results in the commodification of the bodies of ESL students as an integral part of its curriculum. Diversity is codified in its Core Abilities program. A pamphlet for students proclaims that "[MTC] teaches eight Core Abilities that support you as a life-long learner on the job, at home, and in the community." The Core Ability particularly relevant to this study is global awareness. (The pamphlet explains that in global awareness students: "Express an understanding of the interconnections and interactions among people and systems . . . ; accumulate knowledge of and experience with people in their own and other cultures . . . ; describe the impact of the global economy on life, work, and opportunities; recognize the commonality of human experience across cultures; and recognize the influence of diverse cultural perspectives on human thought and behavior.") Interestingly, the institution appears less concerned with developing global awareness among the ALD students themselves than with using ALD students to provide global awareness to others. The Transition Committee's 1999-2000 report stated unselfconsciously that, "Basic skills education students are promoted to the college as a source of global awareness and well-prepared and successful degree-credit program students." Thus, in a curious twist, the ALD promotes "diverse" students who embody global awareness to the rest of the predominantly white institution.

The Hidden Curriculum in the Classroom

The construct of cultural models, the "tacit theories" (Gee, 1996, p.17) that I described more fully in Chapter 5, help uncover the hidden curriculum. Cleary's discourse about his students evidenced his cultural model of the "good student," which had implications for the interactions in the class. Cleary viewed students in interpersonal terms as "wonderful, they're marvelous people. . . . very motivated." Compared with his native-English-speaking students, whom Cleary found distant, the ESL students "are much more eager, much more sociable, they're easier to teach . . . because they're

[16] Lead teacher Powell contradicted the dean's claims, noting that while ABE students in general have a

friendlier. . . . And they know how to be good students." To Cleary "good students" are "interested in your presentation. . . . They're not falling asleep, they're not distracted. They don't look disinterested, just the opposite, they look very interested. They enjoy being here." Cleary's upbeat assessment glossed over much of the students' resistance.

Although Cleary became frustrated at the low level of academic performance of the ESL students, in daily interactions he himself communicated a hidden curriculum of docility, passivity, and low expectations. Bernstein characterizes these as aspects as belonging to one of two "systems of rules regulated by framing," in this case the "rules of social order." These rules "refer to the forms that hierarchical relations take in the pedagogic relation and to expectations about conduct, character and manner" (1996, p. 27). Cleary's curriculum of social order included these points:

- *Listen politely.* Cleary praised the students as "wonderful people that go along with whatever's being presented." He acknowledged the high proportion of the time he spent lecturing, often digressing with stories of his life in Mexico. In contrast, when he teaches for-credit courses, Cleary claims, "There's no wasted time. You know, I don't talk about my life." The BW3 students did not openly challenge this "waste of time." Yet Katarina, for one, was dissatisfied: "[The class] wasn't interesting. Again, because like Mr. Cleary, he was explain[ing] us all his experiences when he had been to Mexico a couple of times. It's not an English class. I think a teacher should make some kind of plan before."

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50% dropout rate, the rate for ESL students is higher, as in this course.

- *Maintain hierarchical distinctions.* By introducing himself using the honorific "Mr.," Cleary established his authority in the classroom. In contrast, Fairclough notes the trend in institutions to eliminate such markers of asymmetrical power relations (1992, p. 203). Supporting this authority role Cleary wore a necktie and pressed trousers to class. (See Tonso, in press, on the gender aspects of dress.) Reflecting on the course Cleary compared the teacher to a parent. "Coming in the middle of the course . . . it's like changing parents halfway." Like parents such teachers exert authority over their students, even adults with much life experience.
- *Conform to traditional gender roles.* Cleary consistently called the female students "girls," even women with children, and frequently commented on their appearance. In a humorous manner, he also ascribed romantic motives to students' absences—although he included men, too. When Rosa, a young Dominican student, returned after missing three classes, Cleary said, "I thought you had a new boyfriend." She later dropped the class for good, although she did not give her reasons.
- *Participate by asking questions about grammar.* Students who asked about specific grammar points or pronunciation received positive feedback. Because the well-educated students knew grammatical terminology as well as the metalinguistic practices of language classrooms it was easy for them participate.
- *Select "nice" topics for writing.* Students proposed their own research paper topics but Cleary had veto power. For instance when Susie, a Taiwanese student who wanted to get a master's degree in special education, suggested suicide as her

topic, Cleary replied, "That's not very happy. Now why would you choose suicide?" After this feedback Susie did not return to the class.

- *Withhold your opinion.* In keeping with his dislike for emotional topics, Cleary criticized the author of the reading on divorce for providing his opinion.

> You think it's his opinion, and that he's not being objective. . . . The author is talking, he's mad, he's angry, yeah, he's very angry. . . . I don't want to hear from this author. And I didn't like it. . . . Because then I go against him. And I don't believe what he says. Yeah, I want an author to be very neutral. . . . Just give me the facts. Be objective and just give me the facts. . . . Don't get emotional. . . . I want you to be very logical.

Cleary's commentary presents some elements of good sense about academic writing. Basic writers often need to learn to turn their opinions into arguments supported by evidence, especially on topics that evoke strong emotions. A topic like divorce, for example, can provide a catalyst for students to separate out the strands of emotion, personal experience, religious beliefs, and societal conventions to construct defensible arguments about their positions. But in preparing students for academic writing a message of neutrality and docility does not support them. In the expository mode commonly used in college composition courses students are frequently asked to take, defend, or argue positions. For this task students need to learn to substantiate their opinions, not to suppress them.

*Student Resistance to the Curriculum*

Early in the semester students began to show discontent with the course. Some responded to the failings of the overt curriculum, others to their perceptions of the hidden curriculum. They ignored Cleary during class; mildly disrupted the class; listened to him passively; carried on side conversations; skipped homework; complained to Cleary; and dropped out of the course. Interestingly, like the students in Everhart's (1983) study of resistance among junior high pupils, the adults in BW3 also occasionally prompted Cleary to digress by asking him, for example, about life in Mexico (FN 2/4/99).

Saky saw that Cleary was unavailable in and outside the class. Despite Saky's frequent confusion he was reluctant to ask for clarification: "He [Cleary] explain[s] but sometime we need, there's too many students asking, you know. And it gonna be my turn, second turn, time's up already." His resistance sometimes took the form of wisecracking under his breath. For instance when Cleary tried to elicit from students where they would seek information on an earthquake in Colombia, after other students offered suggestions like "Call the library," Saky replied, "Call 911" (FN 2/2/99). Ultimately the students who stayed in the course reduced their expectations for it. For example Minji recognized Cleary as a novice in this environment:

> I know he is the lecturer, not the regular professor at the university, I mean, MTC, so he is not responsib[le]. . . . I mean, that if there's a regular professor at the MTC, he . . . [has] more experience and everything for the teaching. But he just teach the class, so he [does] not that much have responsibility about [doing] something for the . . . students."

The range of resistant behaviors included the silent resistance of the high school students that McNeil (1986) documented. Likewise it paralleled the junior high students in Everhart's (1983) study, who carried on simultaneous unrelated conversations while completing their class work. Unlike these pupils subjected to compulsory school attendance, however, the BW3 students had the option of leaving and most of them took it. Ultimately, dropping out of the course (or the institution) constituted the fundamental form of resistance for three-fourths of the class (see Figure 4.1).

The first two students to leave the class, Saky and Ahmad, were young male refugees who worked full-time or more and had the lowest previous educational attainment levels. These students conformed least to the hidden curriculum of docility

and passivity, at times by sitting in the back of the room and muttering comments. They cited time constraints that prevented attending and doing homework and they lacked the word-processing skills that were an unstated prerequisite for the course. Ahmad, the only black student, also felt that Cleary made racist comments and discriminated by not accepting handwritten work. That these students did not attend class regularly or complete assignments allowed them to be blamed for their own failure—or to blame themselves. Chapter 8 discusses the shame that Saky, for example, felt at being unable to complete his homework in a subsequent course because of work demands. As with the resistance that African-American community college students manifested in Weis (1985), dropping out became a contradictory response that negatively affected students even as it demonstrated their agency (see also, Fine, 1991; Willis, 1977). Indeed Saky and Ahmad's goals were deferred indefinitely. A year later neither had finished additional courses in the ALD; nor had Ahmad passed the GED tests.

The four students heading to four-year universities remained the longest, along with the retired Russians. These students were most compliant in their comportment and behavior toward Cleary. For instance Ali Hasan consistently appended "sir" to his questions. Thus students with more cultural capital—higher levels of education, better language skills, better connections in the institution, and more familiarity with using services—benefited most from the community college's courses and services.

Student Accommodation to the Curriculum

Despite these forms of resistance certain students did stay in the course to the end. When asked what they gained from the course they provided varying responses. Katarina

valued BW3 primarily for the social opportunities it offered. She developed a friendship with another Russian, Petra, which continued a year later (INT 5/18/00). The retired Russians likewise encountered a comfortable social setting while they improved their English abilities. In Minji's case, she selected the parts of the curriculum that she found useful, keeping in mind her plans to transfer to the university, and dropped the course when she encountered repetitious material on grammar. The Hasan sisters recognized that many other students had found the class unsatisfactory. Yet they were voluble when identifying what they had gained from their previous semester of BW3. Leila explained:

> for me, when I came here at first my writing was, you know, because I was studying writing in my language, so it was like difficult . . . But after I took like these writing classes my writing is getting really good, I mean the way, and how to express, how to arrange it, like, yeah, I think it's getting better. (INT 4/26/99).

Rana concurred:

> I think it's good because when we study at school there [United Arab Emirates] we didn't use to like write in ten minutes paragraph or more, like a page or more than that. But here when we came in the fall semesters we used to have like ten minutes or five minutes fast writing so we tried to express our ideas about what we could write about. So that gives us good improved. (INT 4/26/99)

But in response to my questions about what they had gained from Cleary's course the Hasans gave curtailed, monosyllabic answers. Like Minji the Hasans had their educational futures in view and perhaps saw little reason to stop attending the course when they had few other demands on their time. The students who accommodated to BW3 were able to identify its strengths and its shortcomings. In fact, most of the students who stayed in the course were those who needed it the least.

## The Economic Level of the Hidden Curriculum

The previous two levels of analysis have identified the role that BW3 played in the interdivisional politics of MTC and in the lives of the students. The lack of a challenging curriculum constitutes one form of the hidden curriculum; it embodies a dearth of institutional confidence in and expectations for these students. It also represents

the "cooling out" of immigrant/refugee students, one mechanism for keeping them in the low-paying labor force or not working. In the case of BW3, however, few students were pre-vocational as most already had or were planning to earn bachelor's degrees. Indeed, given the mixture of students, few were working for pay or seeking work. Of those working, Saky's supervisors at the plastics manufacturing company were pressuring him to further his education so he could assume more responsibility. His own motivation to be in school had more to do with his goal of becoming a police officer, as he wanted to leave the factory job. Ahmad held jobs typical of recent immigrants, cleaning at a bakery and working for a taxi company assisting disabled riders. He characterized his work as usual low-level immigrant work: "the only work I think it's capable for us here, so we have to do it. . . . Most of the immigrant[s] that comes here, . . . even if you are a doctor, you have to start afresh." Ahmad's future goals too motivated his enrollment in the ALD.

The BW3 students can be roughly grouped into three categories in terms of academic aspirations: those planning to transfer to a four-year institution in the near future; those needing to complete more basic education courses before beginning degree programs; and those not interested in pursuing credentialed programs, such as the retirees. As the ALD has not had a systematic way to track students who pass through the division it is difficult to gauge the ultimate effects of courses such as BW3 on them. However, it is clear that the experiences of BW3 students complicate the descriptions of the students, their goals, and the effectiveness of the programs that serve them that make up the literature on community colleges. It is worth noting, for instance, that none of the BW3 students fit the model of someone who takes basic writing as an immediate

precursor to firs-year composition at MTC, although it is certain that occasionally this type of student goes through the ALD.

The Student as Product

In the final analysis basic education programs that attract government grants and workplace contracts may be more successful at shoring themselves up than at achieving their stated mission of preparing students to transfer to vocational programs, community colleges, or four-year universities. In this process these institutions create a new type of product—student bodies—in the same way that the mass media sells the audience to advertisers. The 'student body' is the accumulation of individual students who contribute to the body count, demonstrating that the services for which grant funders pay are being provided. Brown and Clignet argue that "Practical measures of educational policies such as the 'body count' or the 'number of clients' served also express bureaucratic and free-market rhetorics that demoralize both faculty and students" (2000, p. 34). In addition, the ESL student body provides a source of diversity for an institution concerned about minority enrollments. In this scenario if a student drops out of one class but resurfaces in another, in the long run the institution's student count remains unaffected, although retention rates for individual classes suffer. Of course individual teachers and administrators often care passionately about student outcomes. An institutional-level analysis, however, challenges the extent to which individuals can effect large-scale change in the face of these structural goals and pressures.

On the economic level the hidden curriculum (re)produces the commodification of student bodies, a phenomenon that furthers the sweep of privatization, including vouchers and charter schools in public education. Currently, privatization is poised to take over remedial education at the college level, as the proposal to seek outside bids to teach basic education at the City University of New York demonstrates (Arenson, 2000). Thus the hidden curriculum of the ALD, that you get what you pay for, helps prepare students—and the rest of us—to accept the privatization of basic education. In this model those who cannot afford to pay are left out. Students with more capital—of all types—thus unsurprisingly benefit from the educational system.

All types of students assert agency when they find themselves in substandard situations. Many BW3 students refused the various ways in which their bodies were commodified. Ironically, they learned another lesson of consumerism, that the customer is always right. Students actively refused the lesser 'product' they were offered in BW3, despite it being free. The question therefore arises, in what ways did the students' experiences in this one semester of BW3 affect their educational and occupational futures? Chapter 8 reports on my interviews with students a year after the period of this study to identify some of the effects this course had on their lives.

# CHAPTER 8: EPILOGUE TO THE STUDENTS' STORIES

Of the six BW3 students whom I interviewed for this study, three dropped out of the class relatively early in the semester and three remained until the end. One year after my observations of BW3 I interviewed all six of these students again. This epilogue reports on whether and how the students were able to further the educational and life goals they had previously identified. As with all students in the class, these students held a wide range of goals and had varying amounts of cultural, social, and economic capital at their disposal. I begin with a brief update for each student. Then I present the major themes that emerged from the interviews related to issues of access to education for English language learners at the postsecondary level. These interviews, grounded in the overall research of this study, support the claim that learning only English language and composition does not suffice to prepare "basic" education students for entry into higher education; they need to be deliberately brought into the academic community of practice. All of the students in BW3 had enough English proficiency to succeed in school, though perhaps at varying levels. For those who encountered obstacles to higher education, the factors involved were much more complex than simply their level of English or second language literacy. Even students with greater amounts of capital had varied experiences. Indeed, "demonstrating that people possess highly valued cultural resources is only part of the story. It fails to reveal which cultural resources individuals use when and with what effect or, put differently, how cultural resources are transformed into cultural capital"

(Lareau, 1989, p. 179, in Gewirtz, Ball and Bowe, 1995, p. 7). This epilogue attempts to understand this process in these students' lives.

## Updates on Students

One of the students who left BW3 the earliest was Ahmad Jodo, a Sierra Leonean refugee who works in a bakery. Ahmad's ultimate goal is to become a lawyer, following family tradition. In 1999 obstacles that Ahmad encountered both within BW3 and the ALD and in events in his life contributed to his dropping the class. Roommate difficulties had left him with the responsibility to pay rent on a three-bedroom apartment, for which he took a second job driving a taxicab. In the past year he had moved to a less expensive shared apartment and so could quit his second job. By our second interview in May 2000 Ahmad had not returned to take courses at MTC but was planning to re-enroll in the summer 2000 session. His current barrier to higher education is the GED test; on different occasions he has taken four of the five tests that make up the GED, but his scores have been below passing.

Another student who dropped out early was Saky Chang, a Laotian refugee who had attended four different U.S. high schools, graduating from a school in Monroe in 1993. Since then he has worked for a plastics manufacturing company where his supervisors encouraged him to get more education and assume more responsibility. In the past year managerial changes at the factory increased the number of supervisors to whom he reports as well as the need for him to work more overtime. His ultimate ambition is to become a police officer. Saky returned to the ALD in the spring 2000 semester and took two courses, Basic Writing 2 and Basic Reading 2. By April Saky dropped out, citing

overwork and stress from his new bosses. His lack of time prevented him from doing the homework assigned in the two courses. Because of family problems he had moved out of the house he shared with his parents, brother, wife, and six-year-old son. He often goes back and forth between his old and new households.

A third student who dropped out early was Katarina Stevenson, a Russian woman married to an American accountant. Unlike Ahmad and Saky, Katarina had left the class because she found it unchallenging. Katarina had a bachelor's degree in shipbuilding engineering but in Russia had not worked in that field. Rather, she had worked for a Swedish import-export company, where she met her husband. Her goal was to enter MTC's accounting program, which she did in the fall 1999 semester. She took two courses per semester in spring and fall focusing on tax preparation. Katarina planned to enter the H & R Block tax preparer training program in August 2000, then work for Block for a couple years. Because of her seven-year-old son she wants to go to school and work only part-time. In the intervening year between interviews, Katarina began giving private lessons in both the Russian and English languages to students she found through the Internet and the university's Slavic Languages Department. Even in her 1999 interview she voiced her ideas on how to teach a language, imagining herself as a Russian teacher.

Minji Park was one of the few students who stayed in BW3 for nearly the entire semester. A 36-year-old Korean with two daughters, 10 and 12, Minji had a bachelor's degree in home economics, specifically clothing design, and had worked as a shoe designer. Her husband earned his Ph.D. in sociology at the University of the Midwest and

works there as a staff researcher. Minji's goal was to get a second bachelor's degree in voice and music education and to become a music teacher in the public schools. She began her first year as a full-time university student in the fall of 1999. In addition to Music Department courses, Minji took two semesters of English composition in the ESL Program. She received transfer credit for 80 Korean university credits and thus estimated that her bachelor's degree, including teacher certification, would take two more years.

Finally, the Hasan sisters, who remained in BW3 until the last day, along with their brother became full-time students at a campus of the state university located in a large city. They had applied to the University of the Midwest as well but received no response, which may have been the result of computer changes that caused lost applications. Leila and Rana successfully completed their first year at the university, taking courses required for their computer-related majors and distribution requirements needed for graduation. Rana also completed two of the three semesters of ESL composition she needs to take before enrolling in first-year composition (English 101-102). Leila plans to take these ESL composition courses in the future. In 1999-2000, Leila maintained a grade point average of 3.7; Rana's grades were also good, she said, but she did not mention her GPA.

## Themes of Access and Success

Since the original focus of the study was academic literacy I begin by exploring the literacy demands of the school or the workplace as well as the needs of these students to be able to meet such demands. My examination of the emergent themes begins with

the ways that BW3 (and other ESL courses that students mentioned) did or did not prepare students to undertake college-level work. In this discussion I compare BW3 to subsequent writing courses that students took. I also explore the types of background knowledge students needed to have in order to grasp and respond to the academic texts they encountered. Next, students' discussions raised such policy and programmatic concerns as attendance requirements, homework, the credit status of ESL courses, and institutional resources, including counseling. Related to this use of resources is the broader question of the forms of capital at students' disposal. A sharp disparity existed between the refugees' access to many resources they needed compared with that of immigrant/international students. The relevant resources included not only previous educational background but also family support—emotional and financial—and community networks. The availability of these resources also affected students' course selection strategies. Finally I discuss the role of gender in the educational experiences of these students.

Preparation Gained in ALD Courses.

An important question was whether and to what degree students felt that ESL and basic education courses had prepared them for subsequent educational demands or for the literacy demands of their workplaces. It is not easy to group these students according to their educational identities but it is helpful to envision them as occupying places along a continuum of educational involvement, purposes, and goals. For this reason I will treat each thematic question as it relates to each student, grouping students together when appropriate.

For Ahmad the question of how the ALD prepared him for the future is almost irrelevant as yet. Few literacy demands exist at the bakery where he does cleaning work and similar tasks. Although the writing demands there are minimal, bakery employees are sometimes required to read and sign procedural memoranda, directions, and other forms. An avid reader and articulate communicator, Ahmad has no problems with these low-level demands. He reads books and newspapers for pleasure and likes to buy and collect books as well as to use the public library. In Sierra Leone he acted in Shakespearean dramas: "We used to organize plays, like *Macbeth, Julius Caesar, Romeo and Juliet*, I like all those books, you see" (INT 5/13/00).

Ahmad attributes his lack of success on the GED tests to a number of factors: the multiple-choice construction of the tests; the selection of content for each subject area, which he considers arbitrary and disconnected to course syllabi; his coming from another culture; and having a weak background in mathematics. "I wanted to take the GED test for me to get my grade, for me to get a way to enter into college. But I've been thinking it is kind of tricky, it's not really difficult, but it's tricky, you see. And that's why it's not good even to assess somebody's ability. Because people have potential but they can't pass the test, they [are] not admitted to college, you know" (INT 5/13/00). He pointed to the way the GED test questions rely on the test-taker's ability to distinguish among vocabulary words that seem closely related: "It's very similar, you know, there is one word that makes it different" (INT 5/13/00). Ahmad has received help from staff at the ALD's Learning Center, although it was unclear whether in the form of a GED preparation program or unstructured individual tutoring.

In Saky's case, although he has not completed subsequent ALD courses or begun the steps needed to become a police officer, he reported feeling more comfortable with his literacy abilities in the past year. Basic Writing 2 was a lower level course than BW3 and Saky felt more comfortable than he had in BW3 because the instructor communicated her expectations and instructions clearly. Saky considered the new instructor more prepared and having a better sense of the course objectives than Cleary had in BW3. Saky likewise felt good about the reading course he took simultaneously, but became ashamed of his inability to keep up. He compared how he felt in BW3 with his experiences in BW2. In BW3, "I didn't go on the right track, you know. So that's why it's too hard for me. Maybe the teacher not cooperate, not explain me the writing paper" (INT 5/15/00). In the second interview, he commented "last spring, between the year before, it's a lot different. I think I know what I'm doing now. I just don't have the time to do it" (5/15/00).

For Katarina, after the spring 1999 semester when she took a high-level ESL course as well as BW3, she felt she had gained very little in academic terms. She had enrolled in these courses when she arrived in Monroe for social as well as academic reasons. "I didn't want to be home all day alone. Also a couple Russian people are attending this class, just, hah-hah, it just was more like a social class" (INT 6/22/99). In the class she made friends with Petra Turner, another Russian woman who was around her age and also married to an American. In the interim Petra had move to a neighboring state, but Katarina kept in touch with her.

> In her accounting courses, Katarina was not required to do written work other than tests, which were often in multiple-choice format. She spent a lot of time preparing for her courses: "Usually every chapter I was reading probably at least

> three times" (INT 5/18/00). As a result her grades were high and she felt she had learned a lot. Katarina ascribed very little to the ALD courses in terms of preparing her for accounting. She said, "I didn't gain anything. And I didn't lose anything." She concurred with my suggestion that her undergraduate major in engineering probably supported her entrance into another numbers-based field, accounting. "I like math and all that technical stuff," she said (INT 5/18/00).

Minji and the Hasan sisters did feel that the ALD courses had helped them, although they were still not completely prepared for college-level work in English. Minji noted transfer of things she had learned in BW3, which she had taken twice at MTC, to the ESL composition courses she was required to take at the university. English 117 is the first semester in a sequence leading to English 118, the ESL equivalent of first-year composition. English 117 offered "not much special things. You know, I already [was] taking some writing classes at MTC" (INT 4/11/00). She found "most of [the concepts in 117] are quite similar, especially I mean the kind of research paper and everything very similar track like MTC" (INT 4/11/00). She also noted the benefit of learning to use electronic mail at MTC. In the spring of 2000 Minji took English 118, in which the research paper requirement has more prominence. When she chose her final research paper topic, prenatal gender selection in Korea, Minji was very interested in it, and, according to her instructor, did an excellent job.

Despite her positive sense about the basic courses she had taken at MTC, Minji was quick to point out how much more she was learning at the university. She valued the instructional emphasis of English 118 on summarizing readings, as she adopted this technique for studying for music theory courses. "The English program makes me focusing, especially there are many kind of assignment[s]. . . . Summarize is quite good thing for my study. . . . I should focus summarize on many other subjects, in many other

classes, too" (INT 4/11/00). Minji's voice class gave a weekly short-answer test on two chapters of the textbook, "which I should kind of summarize and memorize." In the spring 2000 semester, only her Music Theory II class required papers, "two times a five page paper. . . . most of them are analyze the music but anyway I should write down in English," which was still a challenge for Minji because "I usually using my way of writing, not the American way. So they sometimes took, TA gives some question mark, so what does it mean?" (INT 4/11/00). Other courses had quizzes, tests, and weekly journals.

Rana Hasan distinguished between the basic writing courses she took at ALD and the requirements of the university ESL composition courses. She felt she had gained a grounding in English language and composition at MTC but had a lot more to learn at the university. Neither sister has been required to do much writing in their other courses, which tend to give examinations rather than require papers. Rana and Leila noted little trouble in keeping up with their courses, but because of the brevity of our interview I did not specifically ask them about studying habits or strategies.

Academic Demands.

Other interesting points of comparison emerged between BW3 (and other ALD courses) and the courses that students subsequently took. They needed to devote large amounts of time to learning the content of their new programs. For example, Minji reported sitting through music theory lectures twice (the professor gave the same lecture in two consecutive periods) because the material was difficult. "But it doesn't help too much. I mean, but still I cannot understand even twice, heh-heh" (INT 4/11/00). She

recognized, however, that the material challenged native English speakers too: "even though Americans they can understand the paper about that kind of writing, it's quite different. . . . Once we should write on something about . . . approaches [to] drama. So I asked the other Americans, even two persons I asked them, could you explain what they talk about this paragraph, and they say, I'm honestly say I don't know" (INT 4/11/00). Minji ascribed her difficulty to lack of schema: "I think it's because I have little of the background information about the music theory. . . . [But] it's getting better this [spring] semester with the same person teaching this semester, last semester, so" (INT 4/11/00). She frequently used the resource of the teaching assistant, by going to office hours for help. "I talk a lot with him, the TA. I go a special time anyway just with him. Yeah, he helps a lot and write" (INT 4/11/00).

In English 118 Minji found also it hard to comprehend some of the articles included in the course packet. Again, she felt that a lack of schema hindered her efforts to understand articles on topics such as "the privacy issues about the Internet and the um gene something. . . . The kind of articles is a little bit difficult to understand and to read, actually, . . . but I struggle with summarizing it" (INT 4/11/00). Minji compared herself to other students: "In my class there is a business major. They are very comfortable, they get used to that kind of subject [Internet privacy], but not for me" (INT 4/11/00).

Both Minji and Katarina raised the issue of a lack of background knowledge as a larger factor than linguistic knowledge in the challenges they faced. Katarina noted that "everything is from taxes class, everything is new. And the whole system is new to me. So even to get an idea what this like, bonds, dividends, appreciation and all these

processes, I think even for a regular American person it's very complicated" (INT 5/18/00). Rana Hasan pointed to the high level of vocabulary that her ESL academic writing course required her to learn and integrate into her own writing. She also found the ESL composition textbook, *Human Nature*, difficult to understand at times, as its focus was "humans and humanity," which meant "more philosophy than she was accustomed to (INT 7/14/00). Not all of the courses the students encountered were challenging. For example, Katarina severely criticized the instructor of a course on using the Excel computer program, who read aloud from the course textbook and was unable to answer Katarina's questions.

Homework.

Homework also emerged as an important theme for many students who continued in college. As noted, Saky had difficulties completing his homework in ALD courses. At the university, Minji commented, "compared to MTC . . . [there] is the lots of the homework here. . . . I think this homework quite helps me because . . . usually through the week I prepare many things, step by step, if I study all the time. So [I'm] not busy in the midterm or ending. . . . I think they should give us lots of homework, even if they do not" (INT 4/11/00). Rana Hasan contrasted the strict requirements to do and submit homework in her ESL academic writing course with homework policies of the ALD. "You have to do your homework to finish the course" at the university, she noted (INT 7/14/00).

Policies and Structures

Students compared the policies and structures of the ALD with those of other locations. First, attendance requirements at the university were quite strict, compared with the 25 percent absentee rate allowable in the ALD. Minji pointed to the attendance policies in her university classes, including choir, a credit course. "[In] the choir, too, if we absent three times, then he is very mad. Because the choir is just, [there is] no test in choir. . . You should be ill or sick . . . or the child is sick. . . . So it's a very strict that kind of policy. So I think it help[s] to, everybody is quite, the serious kind of class" (INT 4/11/00).

Minji also had opinions about whether English composition courses should bear credit. When she reached English 118, she felt that the added grade pressure attached to receiving graduation credit for the course was detrimental to ESL students. "There is [in English composition] not all the main subject credit. It if that kind of class just have some other class for the international student, so it's not that very good idea for give some credit" (INT 4/11/00). Contrasting learning to write in English to her disciplinary courses, Minji felt that writing courses should not be given credit "because anyway we just not, there is not all the main subject credit" (INT 4/11/00). Finally, because the MTC courses were free, but the university charges tuition, Minji felt that "it makes a little more stress" at the university (INT 4/11/00). In these opinions, Minji seems to echo Cleary's sentiments that both attaching credit to courses and charging tuition makes students take the courses more seriously. (Yet such pressure may be detrimental to students.)

## Course Selection Strategies

For nonnative-English-speaking college students course selection can often be related to English language proficiency as well as to their interests. Despite Minji's eventual success in English 118 she was glad that she was only required to take one more English course. "That's [English 118] kind of stressed, too, yeah. I'm so glad next semester I don't need to take it, English class" (INT 4/11/00). But at the same time, she wanted to continue taking ESL courses to improve her English. Minji's thoughts on which literature course she should take to fulfill a university requirement demonstrated an interesting strategy. She hoped to take a course in Chinese literature in translation, in part because of the prevalence of the Chinese script in Korea. "In Korea, our language and literature class, I mean [at] the high school, we [are] using lots of Chinese poems in our language because before, about 500 years ago, our language, our letters doesn't come out, before that time we use Chinese characters" (INT 4/11/00). Because of China's historical relationship with Korea, remnants of Chinese pictographs continue to be used in Korean newspapers. For this reason and other cultural similarities Minji felt she would be more comfortable in a Chinese literature class than another literature class.

Saky raised another important point about course selection when I suggested in light of his recent semester's experience that rather than taking—and perhaps dropping—two courses at the same time he should take only one course and focus on completing it. In response he described his strategy of taking two courses simultaneously so that if one of the instructors turned out to be unsatisfactory, there would still be a chance of taking

something useful. Saky here demonstrates a creative response to a series of less-than-satisfactory educational experiences. It represents a slight but important variation on the practice of college students who "shop" for courses at the beginning of a semester by attending lectures or classes and evaluating them on the spot. Saky's strategy took more of a wait-and-see approach, perhaps because he lacked criteria with which to make a quick evaluation of how an instructor would teach.

Katarina's experience with course selection had yielded mixed results. While she seemed content with the accounting courses, her Excel and ESL courses had been disappointing. In her current extracurricular study of French, Katarina felt she could teach herself the basic grammar and structures better than a teacher could.

> I think I wouldn't be able to find a teacher who would be good for me first time. . . . You can ask teacher questions that you don't know or how to pronounce it, different kind of words. But still to get the grammar and construction of sentences and how to speak and memorize all those words, you can use the book. (INT 5/18/00)

She was also reading a book on using the Suzuki method to teach violin, which she hoped would give her ideas for teaching piano to her son. These examples portray Katarina as highly confident in her own autodidactic abilities and skeptical of the instructors she encountered elsewhere.

## Use of Resources

Another important theme is students' access to and use of the available educational and extracurricular services. Bourdieu's concept of cultural and economic capital is particularly helpful in this analysis. The narrative that each of these students embodies can be seen as the playing out of these forms of capital on the educational and economic fields. I examine the students' use of educational services and the support systems they drew on, including their families.

*Institutional Services.*

For students to identify and pursue their educational goals they must clearly understand what those goals entail in terms of education, credentials, and other factors. Students may form such ideas from guidance or placement counselors, instructors, or through personal and family connections. Among the students in this study Minji and Katarina stand out as having both clear goals and the best sense of what they needed to do to achieve them. Minji had hoped to begin her second bachelor's degree some years earlier but child-care responsibilities delayed her education. She had only enrolled in the university's intensive summer English program in 1994, which at that time seemed to her to have too much of an academic emphasis and not enough of a focus on the pronunciation and other skills she needed for daily life. Her age (37), her 12 or so years in the United States, and her husband's academic occupation all contributed to her ability eventually to maneuver in higher education.

Katarina had the objective of working in accounting and could identify the path she needed to take. Her husband's profession as an accountant surely helped Katarina

understand what to do. The standards she had developed from previous educational experiences enabled her to evaluate the instruction she received in the ALD and other divisions of MTC in light of her goals. The Hasan sisters planned to go into some form of computer technology and had rethought which major they would choose because of the different TOEFL score requirements of technology majors. Despite these small degrees of difference all of these students were able to apply to and matriculate into academic or vocational programs. With the exception of Katarina, these students were among those who felt they had gotten the most out of BW3. Both Minji and the Hasans had taken BW3 in the fall 1998 semester and their comments indicated that they felt they had learned more in the fall than the in spring 1999.

Although Ahmad and Saky had clearly identified goals they suffered from a lack of counseling about how to achieve them. According to Comings et al., "the staff of the educational program must help the potential adult student define his or her goal and understand the many instructional objectives that must be accomplished on the road to meeting that goal" (1999, p. 9). In addition, Ahmad and Saky, among others, would have benefited from counseling "addressing physiological and emotional states [that] helps students to deal with the tension, stress, and other negative emotional states that can result from poor self-efficacy and can also lead to low self-efficacy" (Comings et al., 1999, p. 8). Saky's comments about feeling guilty and ashamed support this recommendation.

Family Support Systems.

In addition to being well prepared academically, many of the successful students had strong family support systems behind them. Minji's husband was able to help her by providing her with access to the university's library system even while she was at MTC writing her research paper on child music education. When she entered the university her husband's connections allowed her to locate material for her English 118 research paper, for example, finding a dissertation on prenatal gender selection written by another Korean graduate student. Minji explained, "I know one man who graduated here in the Sociology Department and he's writing on son preferences in Korea . . . my husband in Sociology Department. So I got his paper, yeah, his Ph.D. dissertation" (INT 4/11/00). Katarina's accountant husband teaches accounting part time at MTC, thus providing her with information about her career choice as well as the MTC program. The Hasan sisters benefit not only from the fact that their brother is a student but also from having extended family in the city where they study. These students, along with their families, take part in other social and cultural networks. For instance, Minji and her husband often help new Korean students who arrive in Monroe. Minji also plans to use connections she has made with her daughters' elementary school teachers to find a suitable classroom in which to do her own student teaching.

Role Models.

In addition to family support and local networks, Comings et al. identify the importance to adult learners of having role models. "Adult learners should come into contact with adults who are just like them and have succeeded in an ABE, ESOL, or GED class" (1999, p. 8). For the well-educated students, their role models may have attended

universities rather than adult programs; nonetheless, their influence remains important. In contrast, the lack of role models may be problematic for Saky and Ahmad.

Equally important, the successful students had the financial resources to attend college. Although we did not discuss it directly, Minji and the Hasans seemed to have few financial difficulties in terms of paying tuition. In the first interview Katarina mentioned that her husband supports her so she does not need to work and does not plan to work full time. Last year Rana Hasan worked part-time at a shoe store in Monroe, but Leila did not have a job.

As for the refugees, Ahmad knew that to go to law school he needed to earn a bachelor's degree; he was interested in a political science major. Yet the steps leading from his current situation to getting to the point of transferring to college courses seemed hazy. As an individual refugee in this country with little support, Ahmad was entirely dependent on finding academic advice in the ALD. He seems to have slipped through the cracks there in terms of the formal process of creating a Personal Education Plan. Although Ahmad's father in Sierra Leone and brother in England were role models for him, the practical transfer of such models to another country is difficult. Ahmad was puzzled about how people can work full-time and go to school, questioning the policies that put a cap on income in order to qualify for student loans. "If your amount exceed [a] certain number they don't want you to, they will not give you a loan qualified to get a student loan or whatever" (INT 5/13/00). Ahmad had entered the network of international students at the university in order to find housing, but his experience with the roommate he found was negative. In our first interview Ahmad complained about his lack of a

social life, how hard it is to meet people, and his desire for a girlfriend. Such social isolation is surely detrimental to academic success.

Saky likewise has not received much academic or career counseling from the ALD, and knows little about what is required to become a police officer. He had once spoken with a police officer who works part-time at his factory, but felt embarrassed to ask him about the steps to becoming a police officer. "He's kind of not my age. He's older. He kinda, you know, stuck up. . . . Not unfriendly, but I don't know. I feel uncomfortable when I try to talk to him" (INT 5/15/00). Although his family provides emotional support they know little about the academic system here. Saky's parents speak no English and his younger brother dropped out of high school. An American friend at work helps Saky with his English, but this friend has not gone to college. In his immediate circle Saky has no one who can help him find information on his goals. At the end of the second interview Saky asked me to find out about the police training requirements. Like Ahmad, Saky has financial difficulties paying for college on his salary of about $11 per hour. Nonetheless, he contemplates quitting his factory job to become a part-time security guard so that he could go to school, despite the financial hardship that decision would entail. We see here how Saky and Ahmad's lack of cultural capital hinders their ability to secure the economic capital needed to become students.

## Gender Issues

There are also clear gender implications in this small sample of students. Although Ahmad is single and childless, it is difficult for him to pay for college on his

low wages. The situation is more difficult for Saky, who has a wife and son, although he earns more money than Ahmad. In contrast, the husbands of Minji and Katarina financially support them while they attend school and raise children. I do not know the source of the Hasans' financial support, but their parents seem to be treating brother and sisters equally in sending them all to a four-year university.

The female students who were mothers, Minji and Katarina, delayed or reduced their student roles because of childrearing responsibilities. Minji, who was the primary caregiver for her daughters while they were younger and her husband was a full-time graduate student, had delayed the achievement of her goals. When she entered the university, however, her husband had immediately taken over some of her household responsibilities, making breakfast and lunch for Minji and their daughters every day and shuttling their daughters to their extensive schedule of after-school activities. Katarina enrolled in only two courses per semester at MTC in the 1999-2000 academic year so that she could be at home after school for her first-grade son.

The results of this study show the variety of barriers to educational access for nonnative speakers of English at the community college. Some of these barriers are structural, such as the GED tests that prevent Ahmad from taking college transfer courses. The lack of counseling and immediate role models presents another barrier not only to access to adult education but also to planning for longer term goals such as the ones held by Ahmad and Saky. For many students, not just nonnative English speakers, lack of time presents a serious challenge. Time plays a role in seemingly mundane cases like trying to find time to talk with people who could provide information. For instance,

Saky felt comfortable enough with his reading instructor in the summer course to consider asking her for advice. But their schedules conflicted. He explained, "I don't know when the best time for, every time I try to talk to her, she have class. . . . Then she's on lunch, you know. Probably later she doesn't have a class but probably I have work" (INT 5/15/00). Here again, students with the capital—economic, in this case—to avoid working full-time while in school clearly have an advantage. In this case time really does equal money: With a finite amount of time, students who work often cannot go to school.

## Financial Resources

The role of money is important in other aspects. Even in a program such as the ALD where courses are offered without charge, money is needed for books, parking, child care, and other expenses such as supplies. An indispensable modern school supply is the computer, which presented problems for Ahmad and Saky. Although neither Ahmad nor Saky knew how to type or use the computer both recognized its importance. Ahmad noted that "since computer is like the mother, order of the day now, so you need to have access to it, you see, because whatever business you are doing . . . if you know how to use the computer it will be flexible somehow" (INT 5/13/00). Saky ascribed part of his difficulty to not owning a computer: "That's why I'm in trouble with, cuz I don't have the time [to do homework] and I don't have the tools, you know. . . . I need a computer" (INT 5/15/00). He recommended "more time on the computer" during class "for homework assignments" (INT 5/15/00) to compensate for this problem.

Here again, a lack of information and counseling was crucial, as neither of these students seemed familiar with the computer labs available in the ALD building, other than those in the classroom and the Learning Center. Ahmad dramatically analogized his exclusion from the computer-using community: "They will never show you everything. It's just like in Africa they have their own secret societies. Even if you are a citizen of that country, if you are not a member of that society, you will not know, you see. So these are the things that sometimes makes people who don't, they don't know nothing, you see" (INT 5/13/00). This comment illustrates the exclusion Ahmad felt from the resources at MTC.

The expectation that BW3 course assignments would be typed posed serious problems for students without computer skills, which these students consistently mentioned. Ahmad reiterated the problem: "At times [Cleary] would give you assignment, if you write it with ink, he get mad" (INT 5/13/00). Although in our second interview Saky asked me to help him buy a computer, at the same time he questioned what it might be used for: "I wanted to have one, but I'm not sure. I'm really not sure what I need it for. Every time I ask someone what I need it for, heh-heh, I don't know" (INT 5/15/00). Here he correctly points to the ambiguous position of the computer in education: In many cases, the computer is used only for word-processing rather than more sophisticated functions, but the repercussions of not having access to a word processor disproportionately disadvantage those without it. Thus computer knowledge and access become gatekeepers, unrelated to students' intellectual potential.

## Emotional Obstacles

Finally, there are emotional obstacles to gaining access to higher education. In Saky's case, he felt shame and guilt at not being able to keep up with his courses. Even when instructors offered to accept late assignments the shame that Saky felt kept him away from school. He compared himself with students at other institutions who had benefits such as dormitories and loans, yet rather than seeing these differences as acceptable explanations for why he could not manage similar course loads, he felt ashamed. He also worried about how his high school grades would affect his chances for future academic programs. Yet he had no idea of how to obtain his high school transcripts and assumed his grades were poor: "I don't know [my] average from [my] high school diploma. That's a problem right there. . . . Cuz I just graduate but I don't really know much [in high school], you know, so I probably have a lot of bad grades in there" (INT 5/15/00).

In Ahmad's case ongoing worries about the civil war in Sierra Leone caused him anxiety. He had been cut off from his family and only recently had the letters he had sent home begun to be answered. "I just got information that some of them they are able to save themselves there," he reported (INT 5/13/00). But these letters contained pleas for money and to sponsor relatives to be brought to the United States. Ahmad does not have this kind of money. Another emotional factor was the sense of discrimination Ahmad felt. The only black student in BW3, he felt the instructor had been racist. In the second interview Ahmad noted his discouragement about racism in hiring practices, having seen other African immigrants face difficulties in securing work. "There are some people who are sitting there, you see them, they have the same qualifications as you, but because they

were born here or whatever they give them the job. And you, they don't want to consider you" (INT 5/13/00). He was concerned about repaying student loans if discrimination prevented him from finding a job. "It's not easy, the money. Because if you look at it at times it's not even necessary [to get loans] because even when you go through all that strains, when you are out, you can't secure a good job" (INT 5/13/00). Yet he claimed he would not let discouragement prevent him from achieving his goals.

These cases demonstrate the complex interweaving of factors related to whether and how students succeed in higher education—factors related to but quite distinct from students' experiences within the classroom. Students' previous educational backgrounds, socioeconomic status, family and social networks, and race and gender are all important factors that influence their educational and occupational outcomes. In this case, those with higher levels of cultural, social, and economic capital were successful at parlaying these assets into continued academic achievement, despite the shortcomings of the education they encountered. We can substitute 'adult' for 'children' in the response that Grubb proposes:

> Standard decontextualized approaches to teaching present motivational problems for all students, but some of them—the children of well-educated parents who can provide them the context for learning that schools themselves lack, or middle-class children whose teachers are more likely to depart from the boring ritual of sills and drills in favor of discussion and independence—are better able to cope with these deficiencies. (1997, p. 180)

This is not to say that students with lesser capital cannot also achieve their goals, but that in the interests of equal access, educational institutions must attempt to compensate for this lack when necessary.

# CHAPTER 9: CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated a number of important points about the experiences of adult students of English language and composition. The influx of nonnative speakers of English into two-year colleges highlights the contradictions of institutional missions and creates new challenges for instructors and administrators. As the demographic data in this study demonstrate adult students have varied backgrounds, histories, and educational and occupational goals (Goto, 1999). The contemporary ESL classroom includes economic immigrants, political refugees, and relatives of international students or highly skilled international workers. Students differ on many bases including race, class, gender, age, ethnicity, religion, and educational attainment. The various categories that students occupy contribute to the forms of capital they have and therefore affect their ability to maneuver in institutions of higher education.

## Summary of the Dissertation

Chapter 1 provided the historical and contemporary landscape of immigration against which this study took place, including the increased educational demands of the new global economy and the changing face and number of immigrants to the United States today. Specifically, the bimodal trend in educational attainment levels among immigrants was highlighted for its important repercussions in the ESL

composition classroom, especially for student success. Chapter 2 surveyed the relevant research literature in the field of basic writing and second language composition studies, noting the intersections of ESL and composition. It provided background on the history and role of the community college in American higher education, identifying the community college as a place of entry for many adult immigrants into the educational system. It also created a theoretical framework grounded in critical curriculum theory, which allowed analysis of the data from several perspectives.

Chapter 4 described the research site, participants, and events of the semester under study. It also established the instructional patterns of the BW3 classroom. Chapter 5 undertook a series of discourse analyses on several levels, looking at the institution's public rhetoric, the discourses of affiliation of the instructor and administrators, and the cultural models held by students, instructor, and administrators. These analyses pointed up the contradictions between public rhetoric and actual practices; the exclusion of the instructor from the discourses and teaching community of the Alternative Learning Division; the tensions between the cultural models of instructor held by the staff and the lived experience of the instructor; and the construction of ESL students as both less academically inclined than native English speakers yet also as the embodiment of diversity. The overt and hidden curricula were analyzed in chapters 6 and 7 to show the interplay between power and discourse in both the texts and the instructional methods used within the classroom. Chapter 8 summarized the follow-up interviews conducted with students one year after the original study and pinpointed the important themes that emerged: the relationship between the policies and structures of the

Alternative Learning Division and students' subsequent educational or work experiences; the support services and other resources available for students; and the family and community networks that supported them in their higher educational experiences. Overall the dissertation has described and developed understandings of the multiple forces at work in the complex world of this ESL composition course, linking these forces to circumstances beyond the classroom in the Alternative Learning Division, the community college, the world of higher education, and the global economy.

## Implications of the Study

A number of conclusions emerge from this study. First, it is imperative to recognize the heterogeneous nature of the adult students in the ESL composition classroom. Pratt's notion of the "contact zone" (1987, 1991) helps to understand the ESL classroom less as a homogenous "linguistic community" than as a place of contrast and conflict where learners may or may not share common backgrounds or goals. She proposes stretching the borders of the classroom:

> We are looking for the best pedagogical arts of the contact zone. These will include, we are sure, exercises in storytelling and in identifying with the ideas, interests, histories, and attitudes of others; experiments in transculturation and collaborative work and in the arts of critique, parody, and comparison . . . ; the redemption of the oral; ways for people to engage with suppressed aspects of history (including their own histories), ways to move *into and out of* rhetorics of authenticity; ground rules for communication across lines of difference and hierarchy that go beyond politeness but maintain mutual respect; a systematic approach to the all-important concept of *cultural mediation*. (1991, p. 40, emphasis original)

Replacing the "linguistic utopias" of imagined speech communities with a vision of the constantly changing adult ESL classroom poses a challenge perhaps set by the failure of

old methods. For this reason this study also argues for the implementation of a learner-centered pedagogy (Auerbach, 1992; Fox, 1999; Freire, 1973) that scaffolds students into critical literacy (Lankshear and McLaren, 1993; Sternglass, 1997). Adult students especially benefit from a pedagogy grounded in learners' competences rather than perceived deficits, a pedagogy that also attempts to distribute power from the hands of the instructor to the learners themselves. In fact,

> After thirty years of searching for new ways to deal with the changes in higher education, composition scholars and teachers, whatever labels they bear, have come to an almost unanimous conclusion that the teaching of writing cannot be done by the traditional way of lecturing, but that it must make use of talking, small groups, collaboration, dialogue, and other methods of sharing power in the classroom. (Gale, 1996, p. 27)

Such a redistribution of power could work together with curricular efforts to account for and build on students' disparate backgrounds. To support students in achieving their educational and career goals it is imperative to design and implement curricula based on learners' starting points, whether these adult learners are at high school, college, or graduate levels. Although it is a difficult task, curricula must also be developed that can account for such a wide range of students within one classroom. Addressing the challenges that the variety of immigrant ESL students poses to adult education cannot be left to individual instructors, particularly to ill-supported part-time faculty. Furthermore, without a learner-centered curriculum and a critical mass of less-educated students, it may be difficult for instructors or the curriculum to overcome the classroom and institutional focus on highly educated "international" students who fit more easily into the environment.

Student Support Services

Beyond recommending improvements in curriculum this study points to the continued need for supplemental services for students. Nontraditional students may need more orientation and information about life in institutions of higher education than do traditional ones. Students like Saky and Ahmad need information about career options and the steps needed to take to begin to prepare for such careers. Likewise, students need counseling to inform them about available educational options (Comings et al., 1999). Adult students also need information about practical considerations such as student loan availability and requirements and child care possibilities. Academically, adult ESL students benefit from supplemental tutoring and computer training. Finally, some students may need for the college to provide books, computers, and school supplies.

The Role of Part-time Instructors

Finally the study highlights the need to hire instructors who are prepared to teach the course content, even in "service" courses. Institutions may need to provide or improve training for some instructors, for example, for composition instructors to teach the English language learners who increasingly populate their "regular" classrooms. In all cases, part-time instructors need to be supported and included in the ongoing life of their division or department. The isolation that George Cleary experienced in teaching BW3 exacerbated other poor working conditions in the ALD. Yet the ALD structure, with only three full-time instructors other than Maureen Powell, concentrates an unreasonable

burden on the shoulders of a few, making it difficult for them to attend to the needs of a constantly changing battery of part-time instructors. This condition is familiar to anyone working in underfunded institutions.

Salaries, benefits, and working conditions for part-time instructional staff in the community college cry out for improvement. "The pay scale has been static for several years; the jobs hardly ever convert to regular tenure-track lines; and a record of part-time faculty employment damages one's prospects in the job market" (Pratt, 1997, p. 264). Pratt also notes that English is the field that employs the highest number of part-time instructors. Improvements in instructors' working conditions would, ideally, result in their greater inclusion in the academic communities of which they are often only marginal members. This utopian goal seems less and less likely to be realized as academic labor continues to be casualized in the ongoing fiscal crisis of higher education. "Part-time faculty employment is one of those abusive situations that is just too convenient for institutions to give up if they don't have to" (Pratt, 1997, p. 264). As labor costs are among the most manageable from the administrative perspective, part-time faculty particularly appeal to administrators such as the ALD's Dean Ricardo Garcia. "Administrators on the fast track to bigger things are more often measured by their ability to cut budgets and produce more with less than by the long-term stability and quality of the academic programs for which they [are] responsible" (Pratt, 1997, p. 271).

The problem has reached critical proportions, to the extent that professional associations such as the American Association of University Professors, the National Council of Teachers of English, and Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

have formed a committees and working groups to study the use of part-time faculty. The Modern Language Association, the Conference on College Composition and Communication, and other professional academic organizations have issued policy statements on these problems (Thompson, 1997, p. 289). Yet the effectiveness of professional organizations is limited.

> Thus, despite their growing numbers and the open concern expressed about the conditions of part-time employment by nearly every disciplinary and professional organization, part-time faculty remain largely unseen and unheard in their institutions, which allows the exploitation to go unchecked. Only those strategies that can alter the institutional self-interest are likely to be effective. (Pratt, 1997, p. 272)

The solution that Longmate argues for "is pro-rate wages and benefits, which would remove the cost incentive to hire part-time faculty. Not only would this end much of the economic hardship faced by adjuncts, it would mean their employment would be governed by genuine educational factors" (2000, p. 56). To achieve and guarantee this or other solutions, an effective antidote to the casualization of academic labor and worsening working conditions for legions of part-time faculty is to form trade unions. Legal representation by labor unions would enable faculty to sit at the bargaining table and enter into contracts with university and college administrations to govern salaries, benefits, and working conditions (Aronowitz, 2000; Nelson, 1997). Indeed "unions are the best way to take the cheapness and convenience out of part-time employment because they raise the institution's monetary costs and time investment through both the contract and the act of negotiating it" (Pratt, 1997, p. 273). Even full-time faculty face serious challenges to the traditional academic way of life. According to the American Federation

of Teachers (AFT), "No issue, none whatsoever, arouses more concern among our [higher education] members than the erosion of full-time tenure track faculty positions and their replacement by a growing, and exploited, army of part-time and other non tenure-track faculty" (AFT, 1998, p. 2). The AFT and others have sounded the alarm about this serious trend, whose repercussions have been demonstrated in this study, and emphasized the importance of considering the plight of part-time instructors as one piece of the larger picture.

Bernstein cogently sums up this and the other important issues that I have touched on in this section:

> Acquisition [of education] requires effectively trained, committed, motivated and adequately salaried teachers with career prospects, sensible to the possibilities and contribution of all their pupils, operating in a context which provides the conditions for effective acquisition, and an education which enables reflection on what is to be acquired and how it is to be acquired. (1996, p. 8)

Ultimately, the educational mission of teaching "nontraditional" students and the prospect of creating decent work environments for the faculty who teach these students are neither incompatible nor impossible to achieve. As Kelley points out,

> After all, despite the resemblance, universities aren't exactly banks or investment firms. They have historically been places where alternatives to exploitation and oppression have been discussed and imagined in an institutional setting. They have been

sites of historic movements for social change precisely because the ostensible function of the university is to interrogate knowledge, society, history, and so on. (1997, p. 147)

The low status of community colleges in the world of higher education offers paradoxical possibilities for change. On the one hand because community colleges lack the visibility of their more prestigious four-year counterparts, there may be less public advocacy to prompt change or improve funding and working conditions through legislative appropriations, regulation, or other means. On the other hand, the community college faculty may be more likely to recognize oppressive conditions; for that reason, perhaps, more faculty unions have been organized at community colleges than elsewhere. It would be worthwhile to monitor whether the advent of the part-time faculty union at MTC can effect any of the change that is so clearly needed.

## Directions for Future Research

As the population of immigrant, refugee, and international students at community colleges and four-year institutions of higher education continues to grow, following trends in immigration, the need for additional research into these populations remains. The stark differences in educational attainment levels that were identified among the BW3 students in this study point to much-needed research on immigrant college students. More than any other difference among students, educational background emerged as the most significant in terms of the classroom interactions between students and the instructor and of the outcomes that students achieved within the year after the initial study. Fundamental descriptive research should be conducted to establish the frequency of existence of highly disparate educational attainment levels in adult education programs in community colleges and community agencies. More research should also be undertaken into the educational and social experiences of the students in such courses,

their instructors, and the institutions. In addition it would be worthwhile to learn if the gender split noted here among adult students who remain in courses is a consistent trend.

More useful research remains to be done with the data gathered for the present study I have proposed a fuller analysis of how the experiences of the BW3 instructor affected his membership in the discourses and community of the institution (Curry, 2000a) and an exploration of the challenges that the bimodal trend in immigrant educational levels poses for the curriculum and instructional methods of community college writing courses (Curry, 2000b). I also plan to undertake additional analysis of my data using Pratt's notion of the contact zone, which, appropriately in an ESL setting, disrupts the utopian ideal of "linguistic communities."

My initial research question about how adult immigrant students grapple with a curriculum of Western-style argumentation in composition remains worthy of investigation. Since I originally proposed that question I have become dissatisfied with the notion of a dichotomy between Eastern and Western styles of argumentation that exists in much of the literature on composition and reasoning. In fact research by Mohan and Lo (1985) demonstrates that certain rhetorical modes in Chinese bear similarities to the linear model that characterizes Western argumentation (Reid, 1984).

> Furthermore, adult students will always have a range of personal, educational, and career goals when they enter educational programs. The addition of adult immigrant students' variable educational backgrounds presents important challenges for curriculum development and instructional methods. These challenges include creating instructional materials that will interest a variety of adult students and at the same time enable the instructor to draw on the strengths of students and help them to higher achievement. Instructional methods such as peer tutoring (Nitri, 1999) that draw on variable student strengths are also worthy of investigation and dissemination to the faculty who teach these students. Other

important research concerns the connection between basic education courses and the program of courses in the for-credit divisions of the community college, such as first-year composition. Likewise study of the high school preparation of immigrant students (and those sometimes called Generation 1.5, who immigrated as children or young people, like Saky [Harklau et al., 1999]) would be useful in determining how to support students as they try to move through high school, to the community college, and beyond.

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# APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORMS

**Apprenticing to Academic Discourse: A Comparative Analysis of ESL Academic Writing Programs in University and Community College Settings**
**Student Consent Form**

To understand better how ESL students in a community college and at a four-year university learn academic writing, I am conducting a study of an academic writing course this semester, spring 1999, at MATC. I will conduct the second half of my study at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. This study is part of my Ph.D. work in education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

I am interested in learning how students interact with the curriculum of academic writing courses, and how aspects of their background such as national origin, ethnicity, race, gender, and social class contribute to their interactions with the curriculum. To do this, I will do the following:

* I will attend as many class meetings as I can during the semester and audiotape the class. This will allow me to understand what is happening in the class during the semester.

* I will also take notes during class, which will include the same information as the tapes. These notes will be kept confidential and not shown to anyone else. These notes will help me remember specific events that seem important.

* I will ask to interview (and audiotape) three or four students in the class, two or three times during the semester. Participation in these interviews will be completely voluntary. The interviews will help me to understand in more detail what are the experiences of a few students in the class.

* I will also ask these selected students to share with me the drafts of the writing they do during the semester and to discuss the changes they make in these drafts. This discussion will help me to see how the students understand what they are learning in the class.

As I write up the study, I will use pseudonyms for all participants, including teachers, students, and institutions as well as the city.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Anyone may stop participating at any time before the study ends without penalty. There are no identified risks in participating in this study. Students in the class may benefit by having extra attention paid to their writing process, which I will offer.

The information gained in this study should be useful to help understand how ESL college students learn writing, and what differences in these experiences exist at different types of educational institutions. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at home at (608) 242-7036 or at my office at (608) 263-3758. My office is located at 6144 Helen C. White Hall, 600 N. Park S., Madison. You may also contact Professor Michael W. Apple, the professor who supervises my research, at (608) 263-4592.

Sincerely,

Mary Jane Curry
Principal Investigator
Ph.D. Candidate in Curriculum Theory
Department of Curriculum & Instruction
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Michael W. Apple
Professor
Department of Curriculum & Instruction
University of Wisconsin-Madison

I have read the above information and give my consent to participate in this study.

---

Signature Date

**Apprenticing to Academic Discourse: A Comparative Analysis of ESL Academic Writing Programs in University and Community College Settings**
**Teacher Consent Form**

To understand better how ESL students in a community college and at a four-year university learn academic writing, I am conducting a study of an academic writing course this semester, spring 1999, at MATC. This study is part of my Ph.D. work in education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

I am interested in learning how students interact with the curriculum of academic writing courses, and how aspects of their background such as national origin, ethnicity, race, gender, and social class contribute to their interactions with the curriculum.

To do this, I will attend as many class meetings during the semester as I can and audiotape the classes. I will also take notes during classes, which will include the same information as the tapes. In addition, I will ask to interview (and audiotape) the teacher two or three times during the semester. As I write up the study, I will use pseudonyms for all participants, including teachers, students, and institutions as well as the city.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Anyone may stop participating at any time before the study ends without penalty. There are no identified risks in participating in this study. Students may benefit from the study by having extra attention paid to their writing process, which I will be willing to provide.

The information gained in this study should be useful to help understand how ESL college students learn writing, and what differences in these experiences exist at different kinds of educational institutions. If you have any questions, please call me at home at (608) 242-7036 or at my office at (608) 263-3758. My office is located at 6144 Helen C. White Hall, 600 N. Park S., Madison. You may also contact Professor Michael W. Apple, the professor who supervises my research, at (608) 263-4592.

Sincerely,

Mary Jane Curry
Principal Investigator
Ph.D. Candidate in Curriculum Theory
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Michael W. Apple
Professor, Curriculum & Instruction
University of Wisconsin-Madison

I have read the above information and give my consent to participate in this study.

_____

Signature Date

**ESL Composition in the Community College**
**Interviewee Consent Form**

To understand better how ESL students in a community college learn academic writing, I am conducting a study of an academic writing course at Madison Area Technical College. This study is part of my Ph.D. work in education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

I am interested in learning how students interact with the curriculum of academic writing, and how aspects of their backgrounds such as national origin, ethnicity, race, gender, and social class contribute to their interactions with the curriculum. To do this, I will attend all of the class meetings during the semester and audiotape the class. I will also take notes during class, which will include the same information as the tapes. In addition, I will interview (and audiotape) the teacher and three or four students in the class, two or three times during the semester. I will also ask the selected students to share with me the drafts of the writing they do during the semester and to discuss the changes they make in these drafts. In addition, I will ask to interview administrators of the ESL program. As I write up the study, I will use pseudonyms for all participants, including teachers, students, and the institution as well as the name of the city.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Anyone may stop participating at any time before the study ends without penalty. There are no identified risks in participating in this study.

The information gained in this study should be useful to help understand how ESL college students learn writing. If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at home (608) 242-7036. My address is 239 Dunning St., Madison, WI 53704. You may also contact Professor Michael W. Apple, the professor who supervises my research, at (608) 263-4592.

Sincerely,

Mary Jane Curry
Principal Investigator
Ph.D. Candidate in Curriculum Theory
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Michael W. Apple
Professor, Curriculum & Instruction
University of Wisconsin-Madison

I have read the above information and give my consent to participate in this study and to be quoted in the resulting written description.

Signature _____ Date _____

APPENDIX B: STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE BASIC WRITING 3, MTC

Name_____
Address_____
Telephone_____
Email address _____

Please circle: Male Female
Age_____
Native country_____
Other countries where you lived, and when_____
_____

Native language(s)_____
Other language(s)_____

Occupation (job)_____

Education. Please check off all the levels of education you've reached.
Grade school (grades 1-8)
High school
Years at MTC or other community college_____
University degree
Graduate degree
Other_____

Future educational plans. Please tell me about your plans for your education._____
_____
_____
_____

Future professional plans. Please tell me your plans or hopes for your future job.
_____
_____
_____

Would you be willing to meet with me outside of class for an interview?_____

# APPENDIX C: BASIC WRITING 3 SYLLABUS

# APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

## MTC BW3 Student Interview Questions

What is your full name?

How old are you?

What country or countries do you come from?

What languages do you speak?

How long have you been in Madison? in the U.S.?

Why did you decide to come here?

What are you currently doing? Are you a full-time student? What else do you do?

What are your plans for the future?

How long have you studied at MATC?

What are your plans at MATC?

What other ESL or writing classes have you taken?

How does this writing class fit into those plans?

What was the topic of your research paper?

What are you learning in this class that you think will help with your plans?

Have you learned some of the same things in this class that you studied in other classes?

Have you learned some of the things in this class before you came to the U.S.?

What do you still need to do to reach your goal?

Are there barriers or problems that you can see in reaching your goal?

What do you like in this class? this program?

What do you find missing in this class? this program?

What kind of a support system do you have? Who is available to help you?

What other questions should I ask you about your experience learning writing?

Is there anything else you want to add?

Interview Questions for MTC BW3 Teacher 2/9/99

First, can you tell me about your background?

How did you get into teaching ESL?

What educational preparation did you have?

How long did you live in Mexico? Have you taught in other places?

What kinds of goals do you have for the students in this class?

What kinds of writing will the students in this class learn how to do?

What activities or methods will you use to help the students reach your goals?

How do you plan to use the book?

Do you plan to use other materials as well?

What's your overall philosophy of teaching writing?

Second MTC BW3 Instructor Interview Questions

How did this semester go for you?

What do you feel you accomplished this semester?

What did you not get to do?

What do you think the students learned?

How did this curriculum compare with other courses you have taught?

What kinds of feedback did the students give you during or at the end of the semester?

Was there a formal teacher evaluation procedure?

What kinds of support did you get from MATC for this class?

What kind of support would have helped you more?

How much direction were you given for:

- course curriculum
- course mechanics
- dealing with students
- resources at MATC such as computer lab

How did you come to teach here?

Are you interested in teaching here again?

What would you do differently next time?

What are your long-term goals/plans?

Could I get a copy of your attendance sheets?

Interview Questions for Maureen Powell, ALD Lead Teacher 5/18/99

What is the history of the ESL/ABE program?

How does the ESL program fit into the larger picture at MTC?

Are courses offered for credit or noncredit?

How are students placed into courses?

How are students evaluated?

How do students finish this program and matriculate into other programs?

What is the MTC philosophy of teaching?

What kind of contact are teachers and students expected to have outside class?

Are there regular ALD staff meetings?

How are instructors oriented to the program?

How many full-time and part-time instructors are there?

How do you recruit and hire instructors?

Are instructors evaluated? If so, how?

What is the turnover rate?

Who develops and modifies curriculum?

Can you tell me more about the new series of basic education courses?

Why are these courses offered for free? Are all ALD courses free?

Who pays for courses?

Was the dropout rate this semester typical?

Interview Questions for the Dean of the Alternative Learning Division 10/22/99

Would you please describe the ESL program here?

What is the history of the ESL program?

What is the main focus of the ESL program?

What kinds of students are in the ESL program, and at what levels?

Where are most of the ESL students here headed?

What is your vision of how the ESL program here could be?

How does the ESL program fit into the Alternative Learning Division?

How does the BW3 class serve the needs of educated immigrants?

Less well-educated students such as refugees?

What are your strategies for meeting the diverse needs of such a wide variety of students?

How does the ALD relate to the college transfer and program courses at MATC?

Why not offer an ESL basic writing class?

What kinds of certificate or other programs do ESL students go into after they take ALD courses? Are these vocational or academic programs?

Do all students get a faculty advisor?

How do students move from ESL/ALD courses to freshman English and other courses?

How does the ALD relate to or express the stated mission of MATC?

Who is eligible to take ESL classes here?

Who decides who can take classes here?

How is it possible for classes to be offered for free here?

How are classes funded? Does all funding come from grants?

What percentage of funds goes to ESL compared with other adult ed programs?

Who determines the objectives of the courses?

What are retention and drop out rates for ESL/ALD classes?

What factors contribute to these drop-out rates?

What is the percentage of instructors of color here?

Can you describe the work of the Transition Committee, and how it serves ESL students?

Do part-time instructors work on the Transition Committee?

Do you have statistics on transfers to other MATC programs or to other schools, or drop outs?

Are there reports of the Transition Committee that I could look at?

How did you come to be the dean here? What is your background? How did you get to this position?

What do you like about working with the programs here?

What is your personal philosophy of adult ESL education?

What does the school need to work harder on in terms of ESL students?

How do you feel about the current structure here?

What kinds of gains have been made here?

Are there also problems remaining?

Have you encountered resistance to change here?

If so, what kinds of examples can you think of?

If you had the budget, what would you want to put into place in the ESL program?

Do you think the ESL program gets enough support in the college?

# APPENDIX E: BASIC WRITING 3 CLASS SUMMARIES

Week 2: Thursday, January 21

New students continued to arrive in the class. On an overhead projector Powell used a homework email from Minji to demonstrate how she responded to students' emails. She pointed students to the proofreader's marks in the textbook and showed how she used them in her response to Minji's email. By then George Cleary had been hired. Powell told students they'd have a new teacher. Although she promised that she would ask him to use the same correction system, in later classes Cleary never mentioned it. Powell returned to the "State of the Union Address," having students recall the topics, and mapping them on the board, she asked the class to group the topics into categories and choose a topic on which to draft a paragraph. Again Saky was confused about the assignment, because he worked at night and would have to videotape the address. After the first hour of class the students went to the computer laboratory to enter their drafts on the computer.

Week 4: February 2-4

On Tuesday Cleary passed out a partial syllabus that covered the course's daily assignments until April 14 (Appendix C) and asked students to buy a one-inch binder. The first page of the syllabus had a cartoon of a bus labeled "magical mystery tour," with a group of smiling animals and a lion as driver. Cleary explained his role as the leader ("the driver of the bus") and his conception of writing. "Writing is a kind of a mystery. How do you capture ideas? . . . it's like a spirit. You're capturing something in writing that's like magic. It's absolute magic" (TR 2/2/99). The syllabus read: "Advice: do all assigned work in a timely fashion with pride. Miss class only when absolutely necessary."

Cleary explained his grading system: each paper would receive two grades, the top grade for formatting and the bottom grade for content. He returned the students' papers, noting that some were incorrectly formatted. As he handed back papers he asked Leila and Rana Hasan how long they had been in the United States, and how long they would have to wear head scarves. They replied, "Always—it's our religion" and noted that for Muslim women the scarf must be worn in the presence of men (FN 2/2). When Saky asked how

the other students had emailed their homework to Cleary and said that he didn't know how to use a computer, Cleary promised they would learn how to use email. Ahmad asked Ali what the topic of the dynamic description was; Saky asked Sik-Yu about the day's homework. Ahmad approached Cleary with a handwritten essay, saying he had missed class but had an assignment to hand in, which Cleary accepted. To review a homework exercise on focusing topics students moved around the class to share textbooks.

On the board Cleary wrote "crisis," asking students how to focus the topic. After an extended discussion, Cleary asked the class where they could seek information on their categories. He wrote answers on the board from Irena and Katarina—newspapers, the Internet—but did not include Saky's answer—the library. Saky then suggested "Call 911" (FN 2/2), but got no response. Cleary discussed library resources, suggesting that students read the *New York Times* and *Newsweek*. Departing from an exercise sentence, "World hunger is a crime," Cleary led the class in a wide-ranging discussion of the causes of hunger. Next he lectured at length on the differing attitudes toward the work ethic of Mexicans and U.S. citizens. For homework Cleary asked students to write about how it feels to live in their own countries, telling students to keep their essays short, that they would write longer papers later.

Cleary returned to the textbook exercises on topic sentences. After writing "Suicide should (not) be controlled by society" on the board he asked students to develop four or five sentences pro or con, suggesting that they brainstorm these ideas. He assigned students a homework exercise on sentence fragments and an essay about their country. When Saky asked him to repeat the assignments Cleary showed him the syllabus.

On Thursday Cleary returned papers to the students and talked with them individually, mainly about formatting. He asked Olga to read aloud her paper on the Russian people. He wondered if it was 100 words, as it seemed longer. Next Atsuko read aloud from her essay on the Japanese habit of apologizing. Cleary asked Ahmad if he had written his essay; he said he had left it at home. When Cleary prompted him to describe Sierra Leone Ahmad spoke at length about the history of Sierra Leone and its civil war. After a break Cleary directed students to a Skill Refresher in the book, reading aloud and reviewing parts of speech. He took the class through exercises on dependent clauses and sentence fragments. As the class ended Katarina asked what the homework was. Cleary responded that students should do more research on their own countries and catch up on any outstanding papers. Saky asked Leila to write down the assignment for him, then asked Cleary to repeat it.

Week 5: February 9-11

On Tuesday two new students arrived. After returning students' homework Cleary took them to the computer laboratory, where they took a writing diagnostic test.
On Thursday Cleary presented the concepts of paper topics and key words, asking students how they would find a topic. Students suggested search engines, dictionaries, talking to other people, encyclopedias. Throughout this discussion Katarina and Petra

talked to each other in Russian. Eventually Minji asked Cleary to quiet Katarina and Petra. Next Cleary asked if students had read the divorce article, which he didn't like because it was sad; he only likes "happy stories" (FN 2/11). He explained synopsis in preparation for students to write. He asked students to underline the key words in the divorce article as they read it out loud. Cleary highlighted being objective in contrast to having an opinion, saying, "I want an author to be very neutral. Just give me the facts. I'm more like a scientist or a mathematician. I don't want your emotions. Just tell me what happened" (FN 2/11). He asked the class how many children families normally have in their countries. The class became fascinated with Ahmad, who claimed that his father had 80 children from five wives, and explained that polygamy is a way to relieve a wife of her husband's attentions. When Cleary asked Murat and Ali about their countries a discussion of Muslim marital laws followed. Cleary asked students to write a synopsis of the divorce article in 100 words. Again, Boris and Saky were unclear about the homework.

After a break the class worked on a sentence-combining exercise. The students, mainly Russian, engaged in an extended discussion, proposing various grammatical configurations. Cleary reviewed the assignment.

Week 6: February 16-18

On Tuesday Cleary took the class to the computer lab, where he demonstrated using word-processing programs and the Internet.

On Thursday Cleary returned the students' papers on divorce and other assignments. He read aloud approvingly from Atsuko's paper, "Dancing with a Thousand People," a dynamic description of a folk ball at the university. He instructed Leila to incorporate his corrections and recopy her paper. Cleary collected students' papers on childhood experiences and talked about his childhood in South Dakota. The class worked on a textbook exercise on sentence combining. Leila moved to sit with Rosa to share a book. They chattered while Cleary wrote on the board, and throughout much of the class until Ali whispered to his sister to be quiet.

Cleary discussed reflexive verbs and the differences between standard and nonstandard English, then returned to an exercise on topic sentences and supporting details. Rosa didn't understand that the exercise was seeking multiple correct answers. Next Cleary explained different outline formats. He assigned students to work in small groups on an exercise on supporting topic sentences with relevant details. After a break the class reviewed students' responses.

Week 8: March 9-11

On Tuesday in the computer lab, Cleary handed corrected papers back and passed out a guide to writing research papers. He suggested that students should help each other with their research and elicited responses to why they would want to do research.

Katarina replied, "to find information"; Cleary added "for education" (3/9 FN). He introduced the short research paper and told them to note the websites where they found information on their topics, which they would look for in this class. The students worked quietly as Cleary circulated around the lab. Saky asked for help with formatting a paper, which Katarina gave. Cleary told Boris he should help other students as he knew a lot about the computer.

On Thursday, the students had a research class in the library.

Week 9: March 18

On Thursday Cleary asked students to report on the research topics they had chosen. They ranged from St. Patrick's Day to New Mexico to the American dream to music education in early childhood to suicide. Because there were only five students in class, Cleary told them they would postpone writing activities and continue their research. First they did an exercise on pronoun-antecedent agreement from Chapter 6, Narration and Process. After the exercise Cleary took them to the library, where they could use computers as well as other resources, saying he was curious to find out what was there.

Week 10: March 25

On Thursday only five students attended the class. Cleary told students that they would only discuss their research paper topics. Katarina had narrowed her topic to how ESL is taught in Wisconsin compared with Russia. She mentioned feeling that people in

American society will not accept you if your accent is not good. Leila chose desert animals; Rana's topic was the planets. Cleary advised them to narrow down their topics. Boris mentioned that his topic on the American dream raised philosophical questions that he did not feel qualified to answer as an engineer.

Cleary reminded the students that the next week was spring break, during which they should review all their information, underline the important pieces, and then outline the research paper and make a plan. He told the students the paper should be three to five pages in length, that more would be okay but wasn't necessary. On the board he reviewed the traditional outline format. He suggested that the students use note cards, but told them it was not mandatory. Cleary reminded students to use quote marks for words they take directly from their sources and to be very careful in keeping track of the source of the information. Next he explained paraphrasing and reminded them to use source citations.

Week 11: April 8

On Thursday Cleary returned papers to the students, including an assignment to write a recipe, which earned Irena a gold star. In returning Olga's paper Cleary urged her to follow the format he had specified. Olga's discussion of her research on New Mexico led Cleary into a lecture on New Mexico and Mexico. The research papers were supposed to be due today, along with oral presentations, but most students had not finished their papers. Cleary asked students about the status of their papers and the information they had collected. Some students complained that they had limited time to use the computers in the laboratory, which was why they hadn't all finished.

Week 13: April 27-29

In the computer lab on Tuesday only the Hasans were present working on research papers. Boris's wife was ill, but Cleary knew no other reasons for students' absences.

On Thursday only the Hasan sisters were present, although Irena had been in the computer lab with the Oral Skills class. Cleary returned papers to the Hasans, telling Rana to watch for run-on sentences. Leila asked for explanation and Cleary told her to look for too many "ands" in a sentence, which might indicate two sentences combined. Cleary directed students to the handout on compound adjectives he had given them on Tuesday, a section of his own manuscript. Ali, who had been finishing his paper in the computer lab, joined the class about an hour late.

Week 14: May 6

Thursday was the day of the ESL program picnic, but no one had told Cleary about it. Only four students had come to Powell's Oral Skills class and Richard Dresser, the ESL 5 teacher, had cancelled his class. Atsuko stayed for BW3, but Cleary and Powell talked through most of the period. Atsuko had missed the past month of classes because it was hard for her to come to class without having done her homework. Cleary gave her a copy of his grammar packet and sat down to work on it with her. About half an hour into the class, the Hasans arrived. Cleary directed them to the handout page on redundancy and parallel elements. At the end of class, Cleary returned Ali's paper, saying

it was very interesting. He told the students to come for the final exam the following Tuesday.

Week 15: May 11

Although the Hasan sisters and Atsuko came to the last class Cleary did not mention the final exam, and spent about half an hour talking with them before dismissing the class. He assigned them letter grades for the course.